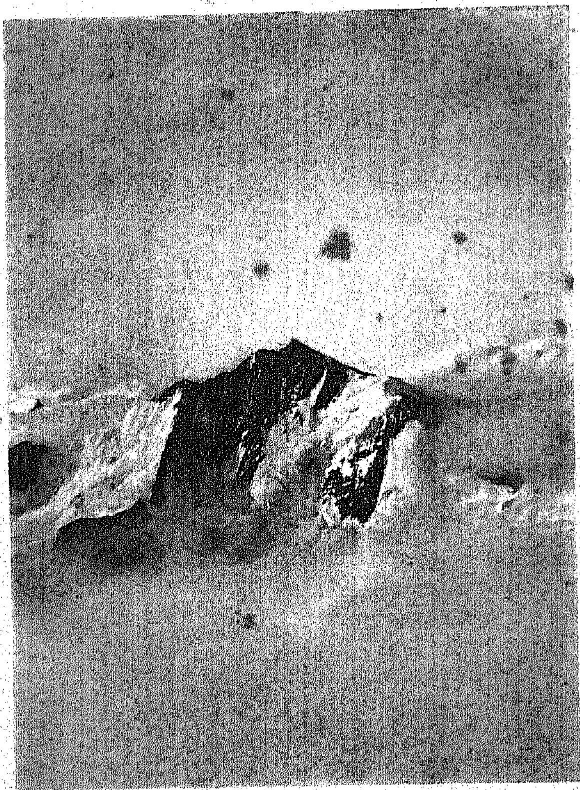
KULU AND LAHOUL

Kulu And Lahoul

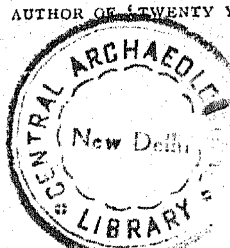


Todd's Giant.

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD 1914

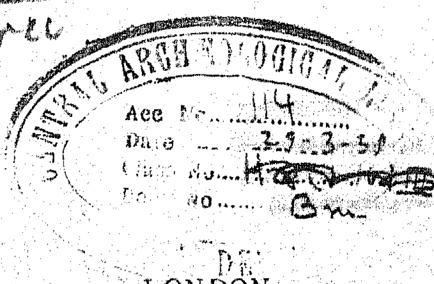
KULU AND LAHOUL

BY LIEUT.-COLONEL
THE HON. C. G. BRUCE, M.V.O.
SIXTH GURKHA RIFLES
AUTHOR OF 'TWENTY YEARS IN THE HIMALAYA'



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

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PREFACE

In my last book on the Himalaya I expressed a hope that one day I should be able to travel in Kulu, Lahoul, and Spiti.

Since then my luck has so far favoured me that I was able to spend a leave of more than six months in two of these attractive districts, and able to enjoy almost the most delightful time that I have ever had in the Himalaya.

These districts, I venture to say, will never be overrun or become hackneyed, even to the extent that parts of Kashmir are.

The mountaineering success of the expedition was almost entirely due to our excellent guide, Heinrich Führer.

We covered a very large extent of country, and spent but a short time in each valley, and if it had not been for his exceptional qualities as a path-finder, over and above his technical qualifications as a climber, we should not have been nearly so successful. Further, we were obliged, owing to continuous bad weather, always to make an early start.

The value of professional assistance in the Himalaya

has been very much argued. Given the right man, there is no question of its advantages. Doubtless there are many amateurs who can dispense with guides for the more difficult mountains, but none of them, as far as I know, live in India.

I do not deny that there is an immense amount of work which can be done without professional assistance, but for all the more difficult climbs, especially when tackled one after the other with little reconnaissance, a first-rate professional is a very great help.

No doubt there are many natives in different parts of the Himalaya who have sufficient mountaineering ability to become quite first-rate guides, given opportunity, time, and training, and a certain amount of general all-round experience, such as a soldier gets, for instance. But my experience is that though one may be able to get them for one year or more, when really wanted they are not forthcoming. This is especially true with regard to soldiers who are so trained.

I have had several Gurkha soldiers who became excellent mountaineers, and a few who were quite out of the ordinary, but last year, although most of the men were still in the army, I was obliged to take two complete novices, one of whom, at least, though very active and strong, was deadly dangerous in snow.

In fact, for reaching peaks, I should have had very little assistance from my Gurkhas until the arrival of Captain Todd and his excellent Chandra Sing, Gurung;

who had already done a considerable amount of work in the high mountains.

I have especially to thank Mr. G. C. L. Howell for his assistance and advice, as also Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke, both for advice and much kindness to both of us, and especially to me when I was recovering from the attentions of the gods.

Lastly, and by no means least, I have to thank the Ilford Company for the immense interest which they took in all our photographic work, and in the assistance they have given us, particularly in preparing the illustrations of this book, and the large number of successful slides, enlargements, etc., which they have made for us. They have our best thanks once more.

C. G. B.

January, 1914.

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KULU AND LAHOUL

CHAPTER I

DHARMSALA TO KULU

In March, 1912, I was granted seven months' leave, to be spent in the Himalaya. Absolutely my own master, and no hard-and-fast programme laid down for me:—What more could the restless wanderer and mountaineer require? I have made many expeditions in the Himalaya, some serious, some not serious enough; some aimed at achieving great height; some aimed at the exploration of a great mountain or mountain group. But in nearly every case there was that most annoying thing, an object in view, always looming before me and destroying pleasure.

No! Give me scope and time. Time to go wherever I like and to do just as I 'darn' please. No great terror of a peak of twenty-five thousand feet always at the back of my mind! Time to enjoy my country, and wander in it, too, if I like; time to do anything that takes my fancy and promises to pay, either from its intrinsic merits as a mountain or as a point likely to give good views of the surrounding country; and, lastly, time to go shooting, if I feel so inclined. This is to my mind pure pleasure. To wander through some of the grand valleys intersecting the Himalaya, and then to climb; then to

explore yet another valley, and then to climb again; suddenly to evolve a fresh plan; to dash over a pass into new country—all this pleases me. But all this requires time, and for once time was available.

Where to go was the next question, and this was solved at the first discussion. Away temptation! I would not go to any place or district presenting only one object, or I should certainly have fallen. Kulu was new to me and delicious in prospect.

Two months exploring the charms of Kulu, and, when the monsoon arrives, over the border and off to Lahoul and Spiti!

But Spiti frightened me at once, for it contains some twenty-three thousand footers; and was not a guide, whom I knew to be extremely keen, coming out to assist my enjoyment? Bad mark against Spiti! Lahoul seemed exactly to suit—a gorgeous climate, I knew, and the map assured me that its mountain-tops were not too near the moon.

As for Kulu, I simply yearned to travel there. It seemed to contain all I wanted—magnificent forests, which I love; fruit, flowers, rivers, picturesque scenery, interesting people, and, of course, mountains. I had also heard of its quaint and curious gods.

So Kulu it was, and Lahoul as well, and they beat all expectations. My wife and I had a most gorgeous holiday!

I will not go so far as to deny that the greater part was given over to mountaineering, but quite a respectable time was spent in travelling the country, without a thought of 1 a.m. calls. How often I felt like the retired Colonel who used to engage a bugler to play the *réveillé* outside his door every morning

at six o'clock, and then cuss him freely and go to sleep again.

My outlook in the mountains is one of pure enjoyment, physical and mental *bien entendu,* without any loathly considerations of science whatever. Why, I do not care if my heights are wrong, most of them are, I dare say; anyhow, they are only approximate. A real sporting time was my outlook. But the unsporting match with the gods, in which I lost, was most unlooked for.

No, we had no record in view, but all the same, the expedition climbed and climbed for three months on end, although, owing to my misunderstanding with the gods, I personally was *hors de combat* for a time.

Before visiting Kulu I had hardly studied the district at all, except from the point of view of guide-books, and any little stray information I could pick up. I knew it to be quite beautiful—the rival, on a smaller scale, of Kashmir—and I also knew that the River Beas ran down its middle. But as to any real knowledge of the country, its structure and conditions, I had none. Nor, although starting on a professedly climbing-tour, had I studied the mountains in any way. I knew, of course, that Kulu was not the country of great giants, but this was the extent of my knowledge. In fact, I started off with the fixed intention of making for nowhere, so that I could go anywhere.

Part of this arrangement was undoubtedly due to Captain Todd of my regiment, my companion for some weeks of the expedition. We had fixed on the district after considerable confabulation, and jointly engaged our excellent guide, Heinrich Führer of

Meiringen and of Gstaad. We had travelled with him in Switzerland during the wretched season of 1910, when he had expressed a hope that he might one day visit the Himalaya. I had also expressed my view to him of what a pleasure trip ought to be, with which he had seemed to agree. Not that I do not consider him the man for a real big climb—quite the contrary. He has all the necessary qualities—light weight, and very wiry frame, and great resistance to cold and fatigue, as well as an unbeatable enthusiasm for the mountains.

As until very shortly before starting I was uncertain whether my leave was available, and as I was also awaiting my wife's arrival from England, I had to engage Führer at the last moment. Consequently, our arrangements had been deferred, and had finally to be concluded by cable—always a difficult matter.

At last, however, our preparations were completed. There had been a good deal to take into consideration, as we proposed to spend several months in the wilds; so tents, stores, rifles, guns, etc., were all despatched by road and rail to Palampur in the Kangra Valley, my wife and self following some ten days later with the remainder of the outfit. We were quite a caravan —our two selves, two Gurkha servants, two Gurkha orderlies, dogs and ponies, and their respective attendants.

Our first destination was the station of the 1st Gurkhas at Dharmsala in the Kangra Valley, where we were to await the arrival of the ponies, who were marching up from the railway, also the heavy luggage. The latter was a slow business. Goods trains in India are not particularly quick in

their movements, but when, in addition to its railway journey, luggage has to be forwarded in bullock carts for another one hundred and fifteen miles, with delays at every stage, the time it takes is colossal. We spent the enforced halt most pleasantly, however, with our old friends, Major and Mrs. Money, at Dharmsala. The English mail meanwhile was anxiously awaited, for two reasons. First, to announce the date of the guide's arrival in India, secondly to produce, by parcel post, a delightful present from a cousin—a Verascope camera. This would have arrived already but for its having gone to the bottom of the sea in the unfortunate *Oceana.* Luckily that excellent firm who were providing camera and plates—the Ilford Co.—had despatched a new outfit the mail after the loss of the first one. Fortunately, again, they had insured both parcels, so that loss of time was the extent of the trouble to us personally.

Our ponies having arrived, we now pushed on to Palampur in order to have all ready for the forward march when the luggage should appear, and spent two pleasant days with Colonel Powney Thompson, the Deputy Commissioner of Kangra.

Still no news of the guide. That, however, might reach us at any moment, so we lived in hope, and were able to start off at last with all our effects safely collected.

A few words on the geographical position of our destination, the Kulu Valley.

The administrative subdivision of Kulu consists of the district of Kulu proper, in which is included the smaller district of Saraj and the Buddhist tract of Lahoul and Spiti, the two last being entirely different

in climate, religion, and people, as well as in aspect.

Kulu proper lies between the thirty-first and thirty-second degrees of north latitude and between the seventy-sixth and seventy-seventh degrees of east longitude. This is a most interesting fact, and may be verified on consulting the map, but really conveys very little to anyone. A clearer idea of the position of Kulu will be gained by stating that it is situated in the Himalaya of the Eastern Panjab, and is directly north of Simla, through which place the main route to the valley lies, although it can be reached by various routes. From the west by the railway terminus at Pathan Kôte, and thence through the Kangra Valley, passing over the range of hills dividing Kangra from Kulu, by either the Dulchi or Babboo Passes. This is by far the most direct route from the Western Panjab, and was the most convenient for our advance on the valley.

The second route is direct from Simla, and I was soon to make acquaintance with this most picturesque road.

A third route, and an easy one, lies through the native state of Mandi, but has the drawback during the summer months of being extremely hot, and therefore to be avoided.

At the present moment of writing a road is being made straight up the valley of the Beas, through Mandi into Kulu proper, which will be a great boon to all the inhabitants of the valley.

The River Beas, one of the five rivers which gives its name to the Panjab, rises at the head of the Kulu Valley, and leaves it through a very remarkable gorge,

where Kulu proper marches with Saraj. The true Kulu is all length but little breadth, and runs up like a sleeve between the districts of Bara and Chota Baghal on the west and Bashahr on the east, to the great chain of mountains which separate it from Lahoul and Spiti, and from the Mongolian world. Our route from Palampur was in every way striking.

The Kangra Valley is most picturesque from one end to the other, and is bounded on the north by the truly remarkable wall of the Dhaoli Dhar range, to which I cannot believe a fellow exists anywhere. The Kangra Valley is a broken, undulating tract of great fertility, merging in the plain of the Panjab at its western extremity, and reaching a height of four thousand feet at the town of Palampur, and retaining that height until it joins the Mandi State directly to its north, and continuing for its whole length. Quite suddenly rises the great Dhaoli Dhar wall, towering twelve thousand feet above Palampur. The highest point it attains is about seventeen thousand feet of elevation. The immense length and continuity of this great wall, and the extraordinary abruptness with which it rises from the plain, is what makes it so striking. There are no remarkable peaks, no great glaciers, but there are rock faces of every degree of steepness surmounting a belt of as dark and gloomy forest as it would be possible to find anywhere. Our route, by a very fair road, led us directly under this mighty barrier. To accentuate yet further the mass and mightiness of the Dhaoli Dhar, its effect on the rainfall must be noted. For the greater part of the year Kangra has by no means a damp climate, but

when the great masses of monsoon cloud driving over the plains of the Panjab suddenly dash against this huge mass, what a downpour results! The station of Dharmsala, on its lowest slopes, receives about one hundred and twenty inches of rain in the three wet months. The amount of water available for agricultural irrigation, etc., must be immense.

Kangra is so broken up into nullahs and small hills that I do not imagine there is much to fear from flood-water, which has so many channels of escape.

Our first march led us through the tea-gardens of Kangra, which suffered so much from the disastrous earthquake of 1906; in fact, hardly one factory was left standing, and the tea trade of the Kangra Valley was virtually ruined. It was pitiful to see gardens which I had formerly known in a flourishing condition so changed.

The journey was a pleasant one. Recent rain having cooled the air, it was not too hot to enjoy walking a good part of the way, though even at an elevation of four thousand feet it is already pretty hot in the middle of the day in April, and marching in the early morning is best. Signs of the approach of the hot weather were not wanting, the surest of them being the steady move of the Gaddi shepherds of Kangra and Chamba in the direction of their summer grazing-grounds.

These Gaddi shepherds as a whole are a very pleasant folk to deal with. They own or graze immense flocks of sheep and goats, driving them all over Kulu and Lahoul and Spiti, even as far as the Lingti plains beyond the Baralacha Pass which leads to Ladakh and Tibet. They are most picturesque

people, and wear a woollen kilt, with yards and yards of woollen rope wound round their waists as a cummer-band or belt. Their voluminous shirts are kilt and shirt in one, and are capacious enough to hold many young lambs when on the march. The Kangra peasant houses, too, are picturesque. Some are thatched, but many are roofed with solid slabs of the local slate, which is a soft blue-grey. The little garden enclosures are a distinct advance on the villages of the plains, with their flat mud roofs, and no attempt at a garden. The drive up is all interesting, but at Sharpur, the half-way bangalow, the view of the Dhaoli Dhar range, already mentioned, is very beautiful.

It is seventy-three miles from Palampur to Sultanpur, the principal town of Kulu, and the whole way is worth seeing. We had now left the region of Government Dak bangalows, with their more or less capable cooks, and had to trust to our own resources. In fact, at last we were off—a most pleasing condition. Nothing, to my mind, is more irritating than waiting day after day to collect things.

The first stage was to Baijnath, an easy march to a very pleasant bangalow, but, like those that followed, only a shelter house, though well situated, and enjoying throughout the year a special breeze of its own; so that when places half a mile off are sweltering, this particular spot is airy and pleasant.

We found also at Baijnath a friend—Mr. Fitz-Gerald, to whom our thanks are due for much information. He complained of the state of the tea trade, but said that it was possible that a railway might partially, at any rate, set it up again.

We had time just to look round the village of Baijnath, with its ancient Hindu temple. It would be well worth staying here a few days. The worst of a financial limit on such occasions is that, once started on a tour, one cannot linger, for this entails paying extra hire for the transport animals.

Our next stage was also interesting. Sixteen hundred feet above the rest-house is an ancient Dogra fort, wonderfully placed from an artistic point of view; but it does not appear, except as a place of refuge, to have been of much use, either for offence or defence.

The next day, during our march to Jatingri, we were overtaken by a telegram, informing me that Führer was already on the high seas, which meant that he had started off fifteen days sooner than we had contemplated. It also meant taking our outfit into Kulu, leaving it there, and doing a forced march to Simla to meet him. Even so, it was almost impossible to get there before he did, and, as it turned out, he arrived in Simla two days before I was able to get in. Every day, therefore, was of value, and it was decidedly annoying to be laid up at the stage beyond Jatingri with a bad throat. Jatingri itself would be a delightful place to stay in, and in the winter has excellent shooting, both pheasant and chikore. We were lucky enough to get the bangalow of the Rajah of Mandi placed at our disposal—a building with immense rooms and timbered ceilings, rather reminding one of an old-fashioned farm-house in its interior.

We were now getting more into the hills, and the character of the country and, to some extent, of the

people, was changing, for the population of the Mandi hills are more or less of the same race as the Kulu folk.

A deadly tedious walk—winding in and out of mild hillsides—brought us to Badwani, from whence our first pass, the Babboo, was visible. There were distinct attractions about the Babboo. We were told that we were the first people to cross it that season, at least to attempt to cross it with animals; that the road had not been mended after the winter snows, and also that fallen trees blocked the path—all of which information turned out to be much exaggerated, as Mark Twain said of the report of his death.

When we did leave Badwani, after a day of heavy rain, we found an excellent road to the foot of the pass, and beyond, though the steep zigzags were in rather bad condition, still the animals were able to get up. On the strength of the alarmist's report, I had engaged sufficient coolies to take the loads over in case of necessity; but until we arrived at the top they were only required on one occasion to move rocks out of the way.

The pass, though of no great height, is quite an interesting gash in the hillside—a very narrow gash too. From the top I and the Gurkha orderlies started off with ice-axes, followed by the coolies, who, as soon as they scented work, showed but little of their former cheerfulness. To be taken over this easy pass, and be well paid, with no work to do, had sounded all right to them.

We took the two riding-ponies down first, and by beating and trampling the snow, and in places cutting it away, got well down some five hundred feet without

much trouble. Then we came to the trees, which had been reported as enormous. Our two or three kukries made short work of them, and they were soon rolled out of the way. The only large one was luckily in a place where we could easily make a path round it. All the same we were really fortunate in getting through, and I fancy the rain of the last few days had helped us considerably. If there had been more snow, there would certainly have been much difficulty, for as it was there was a good bit of floundering on the part of the ponies, who had to be unloaded and led down in several places.

The road down towards the Kulu Valley was beautiful. A fine forest, by no means monotonous, with splendid groups of chestnuts, opening out into a narrow glen with the river winding along it, brought us to our next rest-house, Karaun.

Here we had expected fuss with the coolies. I heard afterwards that the Mandi people are generally a poor lot, and if the average is like the gang that we employed, I am certain the report is correct. Karaun is a scrubby little bangalow, small and dirty, but beautifully situated, and the next eight miles into Kulu was a very pretty walk through a charming valley, which opened out between wooded hills. Cultivated fields and picturesque villages revealed a greater degree of comfort than is usual in the Himalaya.

It was the Borisakhi Mela or Fair in Sultanpur, and the road was thronged with villagers on their way to it; all exceedingly cheerful, wearing their best, most comfortable, homespun, woollen clothes, often gaily checked. The men all wore flowers in their caps, the

corners of which gave scope for a touch of some bright colour, while some of them had contrived the most elaborate chains and tassels of various gay wild flowers. Altogether they presented a most attractive appearance.

The women, too, wore all their finery. Their checked blanket garments were very skilfully pinned together with sets of brass pins. Their jewellery was in many cases very fine; silver ornaments of really good design and workmanship, with head-dresses of silver chains. The whole effect, although rather barbaric, was quaint and becoming, and presented a veritable gala toilet.

Eight miles of most enjoyable walking brought us to Sultanpur, our goal for the day.

This, the chief village of Kulu, is well situated in the valley of the Beas, which is fairly broad here, broad enough to furnish a fine maidan or small park, the feature of the place, on which the fair was to be held. The bangalow looks out on this park, and here we put up in great comfort. Being the capital, as one might say, Sultanpur possesses the one hospital of the valley, the Tehsildar's court, and the only shops selling European stores.

We had not long been sitting in the veranda of the bangalow when the villagers began turning up from all sides. Booths were set up, and the local gods marched in with their bands playing—a fine noise they made too. There will be much more to say about these same gods. Our first introduction to them and their ways was different to anything that we had met with before. Each god was carried in by a special gang told off for the purpose, and was preceded

by a band of its own; the music was of the weirdest description. Occasionally two of the gentlemen met, and there was an exchange of greetings, and the compliments of the season were passed. After they had been sufficiently toted round they were deposited on the grass, and received little further attention.

This particular fair marks the beginning of the month of April, although it is not held till about the 20th of our month, but the festival indicates the Hindu New Year. It is by no means so large a gathering as the great Dasehra Fair, which is held in October; still, to us it was a novel sight, both amusing and interesting.

Taken as a fair there did not seem to be much going on. The October fair is the occasion for selling ponies, woollen cloth, etc., but there was a certain amount of dancing on the green—dancing of the dullest description, hardly indeed to be dignified by the name; but we learnt that the chief business of the fair was only just beginning, and that was the 'loogri' drinking.

Loogri brewing is almost entirely in the hands of the Lahoulis, who are supposed to turn out much better liquor than the native brewers. Loogri is a kind of milky beer, and has a distinctly unpleasant taste. The amount necessary to intoxicate a man must be considerable—several bottles, I should think—and yet nearly all the men set to work to that end, and most successfully too. By the evening the centre of the fair was strewn with most unpleasant corpses.

One fair in Kulu is quite enough, or perhaps one

ought to say one evening, for the morning performances are always worth seeing, full of life and colour, and the gods and their funny little ways and surroundings very amusing.

In Saraj there is apparently no drinking whatever; the heavy drinkers belong to the Kulu Valley proper, and considering the very large number of fairs, there is every opportunity for a debauch about once a week during the summer—to say nothing of the various bothies kept by Lahoulis on the road.

The Sultanpur carousers kept it up pretty well that night, but not loudly enough to spoil our sleep, and we were ready for the road early next morning, for we had decided to take our main camp up to Katrain, one stage farther up the valley, and opposite the small town of Naggar, where dwells the head of the Kulu administration, with other officials.

As my wife had to stay by herself while I flew to Simla and back, this was a desirable move. We still awaited two or three mule-loads, and my wife would stay at Katrain until they arrived, and then move everything up to Manali, a much cooler and more attractive spot at this time of year. We also wished to make the acquaintance of the greatest authority in Kulu, Colonel Tyacke, and his wife, whose books on Kulu sport I had previously read.

The next morning began my trek to Simla. I had to get there in a week. One hundred and fifty miles in seven days! I took my pony and two spare mules with me, though my loads were very light.

Our introduction to the true Kulu Valley the previous day had been very pleasant. The walk from Sultanpur to Katrain, though by no means equal in

beauty to the higher marches, is very characteristic, the broad and not too rapid Beas resembling a big salmon river. The great groves of alder-trees fringing the banks, the wide open slopes of the hillsides, also an unfamiliar hill-folk thronging the roads, with a fair sprinkling of Tibetan and Lahouli traders, were all full of interest to us.

We had, however, seen little of the mountains. They stand back from the main valley, which has somewhat of the character of the valley of the Rhone, though the mountains are still more hidden from view. The Beas is spanned by a number of excellent bridges, so that we could have travelled along either bank. The view is as fine from one as the other.

During some of our marches we passed two or three of the best known of the Kulu fruit-gardens, but were unable to see anything of them as yet, though we did so later on. Given good communications, the fruit industry of Kulu should thrive wonderfully. The few Europeans who have settled in the valley and have taken up fruit-farming produce excellent results. The best of the apples and pears are equal to any in the world, and this with probably the least amount of labour. When, however, one considers that all the fruit has to be sent about a hundred and fifty miles to the nearest railway it is evident what a handicap the trade suffers from. For instance, several kinds of the fruit most prized in India, such as cherries, currants, and peaches, suffer so much in transit that it is not worth while cultivating them for the market, only in small quantities for home consumption.



On the March.

Shortly before our arrival at Katrain, after passing Mr. Donald's fruit-farm at Dhobi, we crossed the Phyrang River, and had a really beautiful view up that valley. As is natural in early May, all the upper grazing-grounds and minor points were still under snow, and the contrast between the splendid dark masses of the typical Kulu forest and white tops on a day full of colour was a very pleasant sight.

One would think that there must be a great sameness in well-cut, well-wooded valleys backed by snowy mountains. Kashmir is full of them, so are all analogous regions, but for all that each has its own distinct character, and this particular view I should never have taken for one in Kashmir. It was completely new, a type of its own. Opposite Katrain, on the left bank of the river, we could see Naggar Castle, the residence of the Assistant-Commissioner of Kulu, besides several other buildings, evidently beautifully placed, and commanding, we felt sure, an outlook which at our lower level was barred from our view. We intended to see it for ourselves later on, and were fortunately able to carry that intention into effect. The situation is quite unique. It is wonderful to imagine any seat of Government having such a magnificent sight always before it.

The colouring of the Kulu Valley is almost impossible to express in words. Artists should make it their own as they have so often done with regard to Kashmir. But again I repeat the Kulu colour is in a class alone, and this richness and brilliance gives a charm and character peculiar to itself.

Having once tasted the flavour of Kulu, both in beauty and interest, I found it very hard to turn my

back on it just at the outset of our trip for a trek, moreover, of at least three hundred miles to Simla, *aller et retour*. But it had to be done, and the quicker the better. One consolation lay in the reflection that it was a very up-and-down road, and so presented no bad training to produce the good condition so desirable for the hard work which lay before me in the mountains after my return.

CHAPTER II

A RUSH TO SIMLA AND BACK

A GLANCE at the map will show the route from Upper Kulu to Simla. There is a mule-track the whole way, delightful to travel along, excepting for the dives down into the heat.

It will be noticed that the road leads down the valley of the Beas until its junction with the Saraj and Tirtran streams at the village of Larji. Here the Beas turns to the west, disappearing down a very striking gorge. It is up this very gorge that a road fit for wheeled traffic is being constructed, the greatest boon possible for all settlers in Kulu.

At Larji one leaves Kulu proper, and enters the district of Saraj, a sub-Alpine country of great beauty; a delightful country to wander about in during the spring or autumn, and possibly early summer. Saraj has a curly backbone which the Simla road has to cross—to wit, the Jalaori range—whose mean height is in the neighbourhood of twelve thousand feet, and the Jalaori Pass itself about ten thousand six hundred and fifty feet.

The walk from Banjar, where I had spent the night in the very comfortable rooms of the police post, is a good pull up, but the road is so pretty and passes through such beautiful forest that the long

rise of over six thousand feet was no particular strain. The open forest is fine; indeed, it boasts some of the grandest trees to be found in the Himalaya, beneath which was spread a carpet of spring flowers.

Nearing the top we had some delay, as there was still a good bit of snow about, it being early in May, and one of my mules went down the hillside. Luckily we were able to get him up again without mishap to either mule or load.

I and my orderly spent a couple of hours on top refreshing the inner man, and then went in search of photographs. Alas! most of the mountains were deep in clouds, and we only occasionally got a glimpse of a snow peak breaking through.

It was a foretaste of the weather that followed us in Kulu until the real rains broke. Clouds gathered and storms broke every afternoon and evening throughout the summer, with fresh snow every other day. Truly an unlucky summer! I heard afterwards that Mr. Meade, who was making an attempt on Kamet, experienced exactly the same sort of weather, probably worse. This was our first warning, and we were much disappointed, as May is generally a clear month.

The nearer peaks of the Jalaori range were very rugged and fine, and looked much bigger than they had really any business to look, for at this time, early in the season, they were still thickly covered with snow.

Letting the mules go on before us, we completed our photography at leisure, and then took a bee-line, and a wrong line as it turned out, to the bangalow at Kôte, which we could see some three thousand feet below us. It proved to be a most charming little spot on a

deodar-covered peninsula, having a small temple of its own, rather a forlorn and dilapidated-looking building, but shaded by the same fine deodars. From Kôte to the Sutlej Valley is three marches, and then one more up to the first bangalow on the Simla road.

One dives down some four thousand feet from the bangalow at Dalash to Luri, on the banks of the Sutlej, and thence there is a direct path straight up to Narkanda of six thousand four hundred feet. I am not likely to forget it. I had slept in Dalash, preferring a cool night to the heat of the Sutlej Valley, and had intended to start at 3 a.m. Not a mule could I raise, or rather not a mule-man, and so did not get off till 6.30, and having to halt at Luri to feed men and mules, did not start up-hill until 10.30, and the first pull up of nearly three thousand feet, with the sun high, and beating straight on my back, has left a vivid impression on my mind. It beat all flesh-reducing systems yet before the public. The evening, however, brought the remnants into Narkanda to be revived with Pilsener beer.

From thence to Simla in two days, to find Führer ensconced in the Grand Hotel, quite fit, and none the worse for a very warm and crowded journey up to Simla.

In three days we started back for Kulu after certain stores had been laid in. Double marches for a man fresh from board ship is a pretty trying experience, but fortunately there was always the interest of the glimpses of the mountains which we got along the road to Narkanda, promises of what was to come.

I think the tremendous scope of some of the views impressed Führer very much. As a matter of fact,

we could not see any of the Kulu Mountains, though we had one or two great views of the Bashahr and Jamsar Banwar ranges, and also in the direction of Spiti.

We did not make the mistake of taking the Sutlej Valley march in one fell swoop, but, sleeping at Luri, were up at Dalash before the sun had risen. We made a double march over the Jalaori.

Führer was much taken with the rhododendrons near the top of the pass. And indeed we were there at exactly the right time for them. A gorgeous sight it was—many shades of crimson and pink, with a soft mauve predominating.

The rest of the march was a trudge, pleasantly broken by a meeting with Mr. Coldstream, the officer in charge of the Kulu subdivision, who was at Banjar, where we called to see him in time for breakfast. He was out, and we were told that he had been suddenly implored to pursue a bear.

After some time he returned in his pyjamas, having had a most exciting rough and tumble, during which one of his men got the bear by his stump of a tail just as he was scrambling into a hole by the side of a mountain stream. There was a bit of a commotion, but all ended well, and the bear joined us at breakfast, but not in a state to enjoy his tea.

The Banjar Mela was being held that day, and I stayed on with Mr. Coldstream, who very kindly took me round and introduced me to the gods and goddesses, who were still quite kind, not having yet been insulted, as they were later on, by stupid people going up to their ancestral and sacred mountain homes.

Mr. Coldstream also arranged photographic groups.

It was a most picturesque sight—the women's dresses touched with colour, and the men's woollen kits quite in keeping, and sporting flowers in their caps, all gay and all sober.

I saw a man's dance—quite the dullest native dance in the entire world, I should say. The men hold a handkerchief in one hand, connect up the other to the next man, and proceed slowly round in a circle, moving so slowly that they hardly appear to be moving at all. 'Here we go round the mulberry-bush' would be wild excitement compared to this footling performance. It seemed to cheer them up, however. To me it was almost as cheering as a sermon by a revivalist preacher.

We continued our journey through Kulu without incident, except the shock Führer got to his nerves by finding German beer at a little Banniah's shop in Sultanpur. It was a pleasant little incident. Thus we arrived in delightful Manali on May 16. The last march in from Katrain to Manali is enjoyable. We passed continual alder-brakes—one might almost call them 'woods'—grass and water of a character that I do not believe exists anywhere else in the Himalaya, and travelled along an apparently flat road, for though the rise is about sixteen hundred feet in twelve and a half miles, it is so gradual as hardly to strike one.

Manali bangalow is beautifully situated in a grove of immense deodars hard to beat anywhere. A fine river close by, rolling grass and woods on either side, and on rising ground across the rice-fields a forest of deodars, in which stands the famous old four-decker temple, a favourite spot for fairs.

It was delightful to find our camp set up, and

pleasant turf to rest upon. I do not think Führer had enjoyed the march as much as I had. Continual marching on roads had blistered his feet badly, and one cannot enjoy scenery under those conditions. However, a few days to recover in was all that was needed, and leisure to study the map and see what was of most interest. I had done about three hundred and twenty miles, and was quite ready to keep quiet for a day or two. Besides, there was an infinite amount of information to be collected, and plenty to see in the place itself.

CHAPTER III

THE SOLANG VALLEY

THERE is nothing so difficult, and I may say so irritating, in giving an account of ordinary travel as producing oneself, so to speak, at the kicking-off spot. To account for oneself, state why one went there, and what one went to do, especially if there is no specific object in view, is desperate to the writer, and no doubt equally so to the reader.

At any rate we had arrived, and there was an object after all—in the first place climbing, and in the second shooting. But unfortunately for the latter the game laws for Kulu had been altered, and only four passes for the better class of game are now offered annually, and these had all been taken up. It did not very much affect me, as the chief game I was after, although it has a close season, never gets shot out, and even the most closely preserved nullahs are open to the mountaineer. Still, I wish the Fates had been kind, as I should like to have got a red bear or two.

I am very sceptical about ibex-shooting in the Kulu of the present day, and think it might be closed with advantage for ten years or so if precautions, such as are taken in Kashmir, could be enforced. But there is no sporting feeling of any sort among the Kulu

peasants, though doubtless they would poach for food with the greatest pleasure in life.

We had not yet decided where to go first. The two valleys we had been recommended to tackle were the Hamta and the Solang. Opinions differed as to which held most attractions.

A glance at the map will show the geography of Upper Kulu. The source of the Beas River is below the Rahtang Pass at Beas Kund. Another, and equally reputable, source is at the head of the Solang Nullah, and to the east the Hamta Nullah, with the Hamta Pass leading into Eastern Lahoul at its head. There was a great attraction at the head of the Hamta: no less than the more than usually sacred points of Deotibi and Indra Killah. Not only so, but I was told that Deotibi was the only peak in Kulu that had been climbed by an Englishman. This climb was accomplished, so I was told, in 1876 by a Major Acland Hood, with another officer and an old shikarri called Tulloo, and a Gurkha who was no good on snow or ice, and was sent back. This sounds excellent, but the elaboration of the expedition was bewildering. First I was told that Deotibi had been ascended in one day from Manali.

Tulloo the leader's account was that they came to a spot between Indra Killah and Deotibi, from which they had turned back, as it was impossible for mere man to ascend the sacred Deotibi. But as he said the same about the Gaphan—of which mountain much more will be related—I do not know what to believe.

We were much drawn to Deotibi, but not to climb it from Manali in a day. I have never yet climbed



THE SOLANG PEAKS.



Monte Rosa from Visp, and I am not going to try at my time of life.

We decided to give the season a little more time to mature, and then to move up the Hamta. We were neither right nor wrong. Fate was against us.

Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke were in a shooting-camp, but far from Manali. They kindly sent a man to help us to start our arrangements, though everything in the coolie line went very smoothly, and I fitted the camp out with four permanent attachés who seemed to be up to their work. So the Solang Valley was decided on. The map also was full of promise.

Führer, self, and a Gurkha went on a preliminary scramble to have a look at our destination, and had a good rough walk up the hillside to the east of Manali for about six thousand feet to a point of observation. We saw enough to excite us, and also many clouds. There were mountains every way, all shapes and sizes.

'Well, I think we shall have plenty for a month of the Solang,' said Führer.

'Yes,' I replied; 'but remember the rains. We have only six weeks this side of the arrival of the monsoon.'

We had been told by everyone, and I am sure quite correctly, that good weather, not only good, but clear, was the normal condition from June 1 to July 15, or at any rate from May 15 to July 1. In many parts of the Himalaya, and still more in the Hindu Koosh, the people will tell you that it is always fine at a certain time, meaning that no rain falls in the valleys, whereas there is continual cloud and bad weather up

the great glaciers. But here in Kulu everything is visible. It is on a European, not a Himalayan, scale. If there are clouds on the mountains they can be seen from the valleys.

On our descent from our reconnaissance we expressed some doubts about the weather, but we were told not to trouble about it, as it always cleared up in June for six weeks. Two days later, on May 19, we left Manali, and pitched our camp in drenching rain opposite the Solang Valley.

It cleared during the night, and we moved to our second camp, a short and most beautiful march of three hours to a 'thach,' or grazing-ground, above the junction of the Sarahi with the main Solang River. We were immensely impressed with the scenery by the side of the Solang stream. Our march led us through typical Himalayan forest wilder than the Sinde Valley of Kashmir, and finer, or just as fine, water scenery, and far more distinguished mountains. The only drawback was that we were rather crushed in by the mountains.

Our camp was delightful—on a bench in the hill-side, a 'thach' in local parlance, just an alp. We pitched our tents on the wide stretch of grass, and found plenty of quite flat ground to move about on, and here we intended to stay for two or three weeks at any rate, and to make this our main base.

Men and women carried quite cheerfully for us, and did not, at this stage of our sojourn, worry us for 'baksheesh' in the manner we later became accustomed to expect of the Kulu porter.

Wood was collected, tents pitched, and we all got properly bedded down, and hoped to have a small

'jolly' round the fire in the evening. Down came the usual evening storm! It rained, it blew, it sleeted. 'Pity,' said Führer; 'fresh snow up above.'

This remark became a platitude after the next few days.

Still, we were really a bit before our time even if it had been an early year, and we had plenty to do exploring the valley.

The following morning three of us, Führer, self, and Lalbahadur, Gurung, orderly and climbing companion, started at about 6 a.m. to reconnoitre the valley.

A scramble of an hour through steep wooded banks of a very annoying density brought us on to snow-banks of considerable steepness but good condition.

The view to the west—that is, to the head of the valley—and to the south was perfect.

Here was an object after all. Here were dozens of objects, in fact. The winter snow on the north side of the south face was very low, well into the forest line, and above rose a really wonderful bank, peak after peak, finally terminating in the beautiful point given as nineteen thousand six hundred feet in the Survey Map. We both exclaimed: 'How like a Weisshorn!' and as we subsequently could find no local name for it, the 'Solang Weisshorn' it has remained.

The head of the Beas Valley is known as Beas Kund, which only means the source of the Beas, and therefore would hardly apply.

The north side of the valley, on the slopes of which we were, was also very fine, but being on it, and there-

fore underneath it, we were unable to see it to advantage. At any rate, we arranged two further expeditions for reconnaissance.

Opposite us were two small peaks of good shape, named Pindri. From their summits evidently a marvellous view of the whole country would be obtainable. We agreed that they must be reached. They also, under present conditions, offered hopes of a good, though not very long, climb, but at the end of what was apparently a hard snow grind. The second reconnaissance was to the head of the valley, to observe a really most attractive pass between the Weisshorn and the northern slopes.

These northern slopes of the Solang separate the valley from Lahoul, and we hoped to make a point in this ridge if possible. But everything depended on the weather. 'Give us a week without snow, and we will do very well,' said Führer. We were having our lunch at the time on a snowy point leading up to the main chain, at a height of about fourteen thousand five hundred feet. Within half an hour of his making this remark up came the wind and down came the snow again, and we were off down the frozen slopes as hard as we could go.

We soon got out of that storm, but it came on again in the evening. I had been on the lookout for marks of ibex, but although we traversed typical ground there was not a single mark in the snow, nor with my glasses could I find any. Marks of red bear were apparent. The Solang Nullah, though closed for shooting, is well known for red bear.

The following day we made an expedition to the head of the valley to Beas Kund. We were very soon

into the snow, which was well down below eleven thousand feet, and gave first-rate going. Steep snow covered the nose of the glacier which filled up the head of the Solang Nullah, and a very pleasant walk brought us to the head of the valley through the finest of scenery. We were able to examine the snow on the slopes leading up to the main ridge on the north side, and also saw the last slopes of Snowy Peak 'M,' which were evidently connected with it and not too difficult.

Of course, there was fresh snow everywhere on the upper slopes, but the way to the ridge was clear. The great glacier slopes of the last three thousand feet were thick in winter snow, the yellowish tint of which showed in places through the pure white of the last falls.

There is a route to the ridge, evidently, and this was the suitable time of year. The seracs would be very difficult later on. 'Give us ten days' fine weather, and we have a high-road.' Thus spake the expert. We then and there settled our gîte.

But that climb was not for us, for we never got three days without fresh snow, let alone ten.

Our subsequent struggles through snow showed us clearly that the immense slopes before us would have been desperately dangerous for our return under present conditions.

The pass at the head of the valley we determined on at once, but thought we would give it a few days to settle down in. We really felt bewildered as we returned to camp with the number of objects which had been crowded upon us, and somewhat depressed by the way the weather continually kept coming in

between us and the attainment of these desirable objects.

My wife met us on our return with lunch, and we all had a pleasant dawdle home to camp, getting in just before the storm broke.

A day off was spent unsuccessfully looking for bears—black ones, that is to say. The black bear is not considered worth including in a licence, and consequently anyone may shoot him.

As a matter of fact very few are shot. They generally do more harm than the red bear, as, besides taking toll of flocks, they also in the autumn invade the fields of Indian corn and other crops.

Preparations were also made for a day out on Pindri—at any rate for a good exploration of the way up to these interesting points, for, standing at the end of the south ridge of the Solang Valley, they command a view in every direction.

Starting late, at 5.30 a.m., we, with Lalbahadur and a couple of our permanent Kulu men, climbed up a steep bank of forest, and over a subsidiary ridge on to the high alp leading to the Pindri points. On arrival at our breakfast place on top of the ridge, we were so fired with the magnificence of our surroundings that we felt it would be foolish to return that day. Führer said we would manage the Pindri points somehow, and meanwhile on our way up would choose a camp, and pointed out to Lalbahadur whereabouts it would be.

Back went Lalbahadur and the coolies to camp for small tents and food, promising to return as soon as possible, and Führer and I started. After a typical ibex scramble, through rhododendrons and birch and

snow, we reached an evidently good place for our camp, clear of snow, and with plenty of dry wood lying about. So, having left all our spare gear, we set off in very light marching order for our peak, for the day was hot, and there was evidently a good snow grind over the kind of slopes that are most tiring: not very steep, absolutely safe, and absolutely certain to hold soft snow.

I had not yet got my high lungs. If one has to acquire sea-legs on board ship one has equally to acquire high lungs in the mountains. Consequently, with a bright sun and deep snow, being three stone heavier and three times a worse walker than Führer, I suffered, and went in deep when he did not.

Führer has a great faculty for making sarcastic remarks without swearing. This is peculiarly annoying to the blown, especially if the remarks are made when one is up to the middle in snow, one leg floundering, and then plunges up to the middle with the other. Here some kindly and encouraging 'cuss' words would cheer, I feel. All snowfields, however, have an ending, and finally we arrived at the foot of the peak, to find the snow in absolutely perfect condition. A very steep pente, but only five hundred feet of it. Some little step cutting, and some little ice work where it was too hard to kick, and we were on top, to be repaid a hundredfold.

The view was beyond any words, perfectly beautiful.

The one thing that repays climbing in the Himalaya is the grandeur of the views from their peaks. With this the Alps cannot compare; they are nowhere. That day we took in half a dozen Alpine ranges.

Close to us was one of the most marvellous arêtes I

have ever seen—the north arête of the Solang Weisshorn, perfectly beautiful! Look at the illustration.

Our own height, about eighteen thousand feet, though nothing very wonderful, was satisfactory so early in the season, and such a bad season at that. We were, in fact, at the junction of the Bara Banghal system with Kulu and Lahoul. We could see where Snowy Peak 'M' joined our ridge, for we were on the same ridge. But his head unfortunately was already in the clouds, and in front of us lay the great ridge dividing Bara Banghal and Chamba from Lahoul.

But the great sight of all was the wonderfully delicate arête of the Solang Weisshorn. We undoubtedly saw the way to the summit by the east and west ridges, the way that Führer and Lalbahadur subsequently followed. But all chances of climbing that entrancing arête were gone in such a season as the present; in fact, it came on to snow even then, and we had to fly.

The descent was dangerous, though only from the point of view of the bad state of the snow, and Führer urged us on at our best pace. We made our camp at about ten o'clock without incident, having had a most interesting and in many ways exciting day.

The excellent Kehar Sing had tea waiting and breakfast as well, and the coolies were seen crossing the glacier on their way to fetch down our camp, but we were cheered by yet another meal brought out to meet us by my wife, who met us a couple of miles from camp.

The following day the weather was bad, so we went



GUNDLA PEAK FROM SOLANG.



again for a scramble round after a bear, and as usual without success. I was very anxious to see ibex, but not a mark yet had I seen on the snow, though we had been to out-of-the-way parts of the valley, and almost from one end of it to the other. Now was our time to go to the actual end. The pass at the farther end was our destination, and when we told the people that we were going up they were much amused. The pass was crossed occasionally, they said, but at this time of year it was impossible, and, not only impossible, it was ludicrous to attempt to cross it.

One of the best men that I saw in Kulu was with us; strong and lusty—an exception. Few Kulu men are heavily built; they are usually of slight figure, and not very well-developed limbs. But this man was powerfully built, and a very good carrier. He was particularly scornful of our intentions. Of course, snow and ice are not the Kulu man's speciality. He has no proper footgear, to begin with, though, like all Himalayans, he can go on very awkward ground in pursuit of game. I was glad this man was with us, not that I prided myself on my own reputation, but I was proud of that of my party.

We had a very pleasant picnic walk to Beas Kund, my wife coming with us for some way, and again had a glorious view of the route to Snowy Peak 'M.' But now we had learnt our lesson, and these tremendous snow-slopes were not for us this year.

A camping-ground was a difficulty, but at last we found an outcrop of rock, and cut the snow away from it sufficiently to place our tents. The height

was approximately thirteen thousand five hundred feet.

We were let off pretty easily that night: only one small rush of sleet disturbed our sleep about 8 p.m. We had Emprote and tea about midnight, and got off at 1 a.m.—that unholy hour! It was a very cold morning, with a slight breeze blowing down from the pass. The easy trudge over the east snow-slopes soon gave way to heart-breaking frozen avalanche débris as we closed into the pass, a long gully in the mountain-side.

The avalanche débris was large, the interval softish snow, and a Lanterna Tascabile Excelsior del Clubo Alpino Italiano does not give a very certain light. The angle was also the steepest at which this stuff can remain. At last a ridge of rocks was reached, which led us in comparative comfort on to steep snow-slopes above, though it was a very narrow place. Thence upwards over steep snow, a little ice, a rather awkward traverse, and finally a little bit of cutting landed us on our pass at 8 a.m., all very merry and bright.

But on the way there had been certain incidents. That infernal avalanche débris had been disastrous, and when the final long steep slopes were reached the occasional stretches of snow, especially during a long traverse to the main line of the pass, proved to be very soft, and in went the heavy weight again and again, and off went the sarcastic remarks without the cusses.

'A little early in the season, I think, Major Bruce? Why don't you step more lightly?' etc., etc. Quite right, no doubt, but I did yearn for a good 'cuss'

word; it would have been so cheering, as I said before. Meanwhile the victim had hardly breath to fill in the right kind of blanks. If one wants to make people go on, however, the best way is certainly to make them angry. My pace got better and better as I neared the top. A good breakfast set me up, and we made another point to the north, about five hundred feet higher.

After lunch in camp we had a great confabulation. Now, one of the advantages of having no one particular object in the expedition is that plans can be changed without upsetting anything.

The whole of the Kulu Valley is dominated by one peak, the Gaphan. But it ought by no means to enjoy such distinction. It is in itself inadequate to take the place of favourite. Undoubtedly a fine peak, not to say a beautiful one; still, even on its own ridge there is one more beautiful, and it cannot compare in structure with the Weisshorn of the Solang Valley, nor with an infinite variety of peaks in Lahoul. Still, there it is, always looking at one nearly all the way down Kulu, that long sleeve which takes no account of its own beautiful summits.

We had already come to the conclusion that if we wanted to leave our mark, or even less simply to stand well, it was up to us to climb the Gaphan; also, on top of the Gaphan lived an attractively vindictive deity. Both Hindus and Mohammedans were agreed that the god of the Gaphan was, so to speak, 'hot stuff.' More of him and his exploits will be heard later on, for he certainly did, taking it all round, play up to his reputation.

At all events, we had to settle whether, considering

the weather, and that the Monsoon could not be very far off, it would not be better to cross the head of the valley into Lahoul and have a go at the Gaphan while the weather might still possibly be propitious.

As the mountain is exactly opposite the end of the Kulu sleeve, and the depression of the Rahtang Pass, all clouds passing over the Rahtang naturally settle on it, and probably it has more bad weather in its neighbourhood than any other point of Lahoul.

To the east the mountains of Spiti, Bashahr and Jamsar Banwar were piled in endless masses; to the north-east lay Lahoul and Spiti. Directly to our east and near Deotibi, Penguri, and Indra Killah, and immediately behind them the fearsome Shigri peak, while away in the distance the shadowy outlines of various other mountains rose line upon line in endless succession. Endless in number, variety, and form, and without that hardness usually connected with very clear views. Signs were not wanting of the usual disturbance.

Behind us to the west was the ridge leading to the Weisshorn, on which Führer and Lalbahadur were subsequently to have some of the hardest expeditions of the season.

To the north of the valley we could see every inch of the route we hoped to make up to snowy peak 'M,' and how it was connected with the main ridge, for it was evident from here that it jutted off from the main ridge, and was connected by a narrow snow arête.

'A long expedition,' said Führer, 'but it will certainly go.'

After an hour's wait on top, which we immensely

enjoyed, we turned down, hoping that we should find our camp fixed up and a cup of tea ready for us on arrival. Now, whatever is best at other times, a cup of hot tea is the best thing of all to be taken at once after coming off a mountain, then a few moments' reflection, and then other food.

A couple of hours' flounder brought us to the gîte, but not a sign of the men. We collected our spare kit, and had a biscuit or two, when down came the afternoon storm in particularly violent form. We simply had to flee for refuge, and luckily down a steep snow-gully found a small cave. After an hour and a half we heard shouts from below, and saw Lalbahadur, who had been induced to bring the coolies by what they maintained to be a short cut or rather an easier way. Instead of which, to reach us involved their crossing some difficult snow-slopes, and the weather was bad—there was no mistake about that. Finally, however, they were all collected and camp pitched.

We had seen exactly what we wanted to do on the following day: an exploration up the glacier towards the peaks cutting us off from the Weisshorn, and if possible to make a pass on this ridge, so as to get either a view of the Weisshorn itself or of a route to the great snowfield which must lead to the ridge.

When we had settled down the coolies were despatched, with the exception of my Gurkha servant Kehar Sing, who had come up with them, and on whose culinary ministrations we chiefly depended for our nourishment. A good travelling servant is the greatest boon possible in the Himalaya. This particular one, a Gurung by tribe, from Darjeeling, has had large experience.

He has travelled in Burmah, thence with our expedition to Lhassa, as servant to an officer. He accompanied Mr. Mumm, Dr. Longstaff, and myself through part of Garhwal, and afterwards was our factotum in Kashmir and Kaghan. Since then he has been with Mr. Meade on his first attempt on Kamet, and is, besides, a very good goer himself. Consequently we soon had everything in order, and a hot meal ready. The storm, too, soon subsided.

'Up very early,' said Führer; 'we start not later than one.'

Now, one of the greatest assets for a soldier to possess or acquire is the habit of rising at any moment of the night, but it is a horrible habit, and to creep out of a tent into the breezy night air after a long day, having had probably only four or five hours sleep, and into a pair of partially frozen boots takes a bit of resolution. However, with the mountains in their present condition it was the only chance. So, after a drink of hot tea and Emprote—Mr. Eustace Miles' incomparable preparation—we were off. Emprote was our best friend throughout the expedition. I personally eat and drink anything, but I have never taken any form of food which seems to me so suitable for the mountains, and especially for very high mountains and high camps.

We used it continually on all our expeditions, and though incessant and arduous climbs were accomplished, none of the party suffered from either staleness or mountain sickness.

It is above everything eminently digestible, very quickly nourishes, and is most sustaining. Personally,

I can testify to being much fortified by its use on many occasions.

A long tramp of a couple of hours brought us on to an upper snowfield directly under our ridge, and at 3 a.m. we had a little breakfast and then tackled the very steep snow-covered ice fall, which led to the upper snowfields leading to our pass.

I imagine that later in the year it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to get through such masses, but except for a sprinkling of fresh snow the surface was in good condition. Over avalanche débris for an hour, at the steepest angle, a most wearying performance, and then a very steep pente of snow, which, to our disgust, began to get soft as we descended, until we found ourselves sinking in knee-deep. This was desperately hard work; but it was getting light at last, which is always comforting. Still, it was very cold to the feet. We were now at a height of sixteen thousand feet approximately, very possibly more, as our Pindri peak of yesterday was well below us.

The slopes gradually eased, and we found ourselves on a small plateau between two unnamed peaks, but cut off from their ridge by a very considerable schrund, and the snow deep and soft.

It was an awkward place, and after one attempt we sat down and had some food. The pass was evidently an hour farther on, possibly more, considering the state of the snow. Clouds were coming up fast, and had a swirly, angry look, also it was getting comparatively late, and those nasty slopes below, with the very steep seracs and banks, that hung above our track, gave us pause.

When it actually began to snow I came to a

decision, and 'Back, and quick about it!' was the word. I think I was right. It was only an exploring climb, and getting through the steep stuff among the seracs gave us plenty to do, especially with Führer's 'Hurry, hurry!' over the exposed parts, where I was, at any rate, sinking half-way up my thigh every other step.

However, nothing actually did move on our descent, and we were pretty soon out of all danger. Then flump, flump over the snowfield until we reached the old snow, which led us in rapid descent to our camp; down which descent we were able to get some good glissades, a very pleasant mode of progression for weary men.

This time the pot of tea was ready, and also soup, and every luxury of the season, and after a good rest we started off for our main camp at our thach, very pleased with our time out—the first bit of mountaineering we had had. We got into camp at 5 p.m. to find more pots of tea ready in response to our warning yells.

The next day I received my first threat from the gods. I was told that as long as we went into the high hills so long would the bad weather last, and that it was affecting the villagers, as the rain prevented their crops from ripening.

It was my ignorance that did it, of course. I did not know the right steps to take, and I humbly apologized to the gods, the villagers, and, above all, to Führer, for the unnecessary trouble my ignorance caused. I was afterwards told that what I should have done was to have sacrificed a red goat to the presiding deity of the valley, Jogri, to wit, who sent

me the message. Later, because we did not desist from our onslaught on his fastness, I received another message, warning me that if we did not stop other and worse things would happen to me personally. This turned out to be true, but not at the hands of old man Jogri: it was through another deity, who also had a grudge against me.

The Kulu gods are innumerable, male and female, and apparently live in mountains, in trees, and in streams—one never knows where one may not run upon them. They are, of course, the relics of ancient demon worship, although I believe the Brahmins have given out that they are all really incarnations of either Parvatti or Mahdeo, orthodox Hindu deities.

Every valley and village has its god, and they are regarded almost as if they were big human beings—and living ones. They, in fact, own property, and occasionally have lawsuits about it.

The people certainly believe in their present existence amongst them—a quite genuine belief. They even go so far as to get their gods punished if necessary. Only some few years ago, on account of a drought, they brought several of their gods in to interview the Assistant Commissioner of Kulu, and implored him to shut them up in the police lock-up until they behaved themselves better and produced rain. Well, three days later the rain came in deluges. There is no dealing with occurrences of that kind. To the people the rain was a perfectly natural result of their action.

So convinced are the Kulu people of the existence of their deities that they would not even quote such an incident as a proof. The wishes of the gods are

made known by their special attendants or 'chelas,' who become possessed, and then act as the mouthpiece of the god or goddess. There is no questioning the genuineness of the fit of the chela. Self-hypnotism, no doubt, but not hypocrisy. He works himself up into a fit, and is to all intents and purposes abnormal. But whatever he says, he himself believes in his possession by his deity. There may be occasional impostures, but as a general rule it is all intensely believed in. I should imagine the Kulu people to be the most superstitious in the Himalaya. Also, as far as I could make out, the Mohammedan of Kulu, a degenerate Mussalman, though he pretends to be shocked, really believes in the existence of all these gods and goddesses, although he classes them as demons. Certainly, when later on we went to the Gaphan beyond the Rahtang Pass, we were warned to beware of the demon or god of the Gaphan, as he was very vindictive. And this warning was given by Mussalmans as well as by Hindus.

After our last climb we took a couple of days' rest, except for a longish walk up one of the ridges to the north to examine a most attractive bit of country, and had a chase after an old black bear who went galumphing across the ridge in front of us. After much discussion we arrived at the conclusion that we would go down to Manali, make out a small expedition, and—hurrah! another change of plan—make a rush into Spiti, and return via the Hamta, and visit Deotibi.

Here was a first-class *bouleversement* of everything, and that is what I really do enjoy.

At lightning speed we sent off several special

envoys with letters to the Thakur of Lahoul by which to arrange our transport. More went down to Manali to procure coolies for our special camp, and move us down. Then, quite cheered by the prospect of something new and unexpected, we walked down to Manali to settle my wife into her camp, as she would stay there during our rough-and-ready rush into Lahoul.

'No mere Gaphans,' we said; 'we'll be off on the rough road to Losar in Spiti.' It was a case again of man proposing. Still, our journey to Koksar via the Rahtang Pass was quite delightful. The head of the Kulu Valley cannot be thus briefly dismissed. In its smiling way it is a gem.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST VISIT TO LAHOUL

After Solang, with its light camp, the Dak bangalow at Manali, larger tents (one can hardly say large, seeing that our biggest was only eighty pounds), and fine, spreading deodar-trees were quite civilized. Manali, or, to speak quite correctly, Dana, was not yet hot except in the middle of the day, but its special plague of flies of all kinds had begun. We gave more thought to our project, and were quite convinced that our best chance of seeing Spiti in good condition was to do it at once, especially as Führer wished to get back to Europe in time to lay in the winter sports stock for his shop.

To delay going to Spiti until the autumn would have meant going there alone, as Todd's leave, I knew, would not run to it, and I was very anxious to do a good peak and get a good view of the country. Spiti is a distinctly difficult country to travel in, owing to the trouble in getting supplies of any sort. Except for the Gaddi shepherds, who can sell sheep, one can count on no supplies, so that, coupled with the long distances to be traversed, one has to carry food for coolies as well as for the party itself.

We had determined to cross over the Rahtang Pass, before mentioned, and descend to Koksar on the

Lahoul side to meet our carriers, in order to reconnoitre the Gaphan against our final onslaught. We had planned to be away a fortnight, and then to return to Kulu via the Hamta Pass and Hamta Valley, and spend a good week with Deotibi and Indra Killah and Penguri. The sources of the Beas River in the lower Rahtang are quite beautiful. The gorge of the Beas below the rest-house of Rahla would attract attention in any country. It is a rich and smiling outlook, of a North Italian type, very heavy, rich colouring, and bold, finely shaped mountains.

The scale is large, but much more Alpine than Himalayan in character. The Rahtang Pass itself is crossed by an excellent path, fit for riding and mule transport; and if the roadway were a little smoother, it would almost be possible to pull a rickshaw over it when the snow is once off.

Of course, as early as June 3—the day we crossed it—there was still a great deal of snow, and the level top was a snowfield which appeared—so thick was it—as if it must be a permanency.

The road was crowded with Bhotia and Lahoul traders, and with shepherds and their flocks moving to the summer grazing-grounds, and the track was in most places beaten hard.

It is a long pull from Rahla to the top of the pass of some five thousand feet; but, luckily, one can find very pleasant short cuts, which immensely relieve the monotony of trailing round zig-zags.

The pass has a sinister reputation. It is at the very head of the long sleeve of the Kulu Valley, and is also rather a windtrap in itself, and I can quite

imagine that anyone caught in bad weather very early or late in the year would be likely to have a very bad time indeed. But after early summer until quite the autumn there is nothing to be afraid of. We were told that it is actually dangerous to be on the pass later than ten o'clock, on account of the terrible winds which always get up at midday, but my own experience of the pass and the habits of the natives show this idea to be quite erroneous. The natives cross at any time of the day, and, except early and late in the year, when, naturally, a storm blowing across a narrow ridge is dangerous, there is no danger at all—hardly more so than on Brighton Pier. It is certainly a much less dangerous pass than the Burzil* in bad weather, as the open and exposed part at the top is very much shorter.

Information in Kulu is always exaggerated. There have been, of course, many deaths on this pass of people caught when trying to force their way over in bad weather, but this happens in nearly every pass in all mountainous countries which are so situated.

We had rather a disappointment on the top of the pass. As usual, after midday, clouds came up, and we only had a taste of what we might expect; for though the immense collection of tops of ridges, ice faces, and the ends of glaciers that we saw were striking, they only added to that disappointment.

The Gaphan itself, which we wished to reconnoitre, was a mass of cloud. However, we were not disappointed in other ways. I know of no greater contrast in any other part of the Himalaya that I have

* On the Gilgit-Kashmir road.

been in than that which the north and south sides of the Rahtang presents. The face of the country, the general appearance, the houses and character of the people, everything has changed. In the short space of a sharp morning's walk, one world is left for another. The richly wooded and grassy hillsides of Kulu stop short—I was going to say 'bang,' and that really expresses it—then one jumps down the other side, and lands almost in Tibet; not quite, for it is not quite so bare as true Tibet, though at the first glance it seems to be absolutely treeless.

Tibetan encampments are seen everywhere, instead of the picturesque Swiss-like villages of Kulu—an entirely different style of building. Flat, square houses, generally whitewashed, many grouped together, and built in a manner which tells its own tale at once. All the openings to the house are on the same side; and surely few valleys can be colder than the valley of the Chandra River in the winter.

The descent from the Rahtang to the small bangalow of Koksar is about three thousand two hundred feet—from thirteen thousand four hundred to ten thousand two hundred feet approximately. In June it is nearly all snow-slopes; later on in the year there is hardly a vestige of snow on the pass.

We had a great time flying down, and found many convenient little glissades. The weather broke just as we got to the little bangalow, but we were pretty soon comfortable. It was a scrubby little abode, but we were very glad of it, for the regular Koksar wind was blowing, and even in June it can be cold. Koksar is the highest inhabited part of the Chandra Valley.

The district of Lahoul is drained by two rivers—the Chandra and the Bhaga, both rising close to the Baralacha Pass on the main road to Ladakh. Thence they are divided by the great mass of the Central Lahoul Himalayan group which they enclose and finally meet each other to the west, and for a short distance are known as the Chandra-Bhagha; and shortly afterwards, when in Chamba territory, blossom into the Chenab, one of the five great rivers of the Panjab.

We had a regular 'tamasha' soon after our arrival. The headmen of the village appeared, and we had a confabulation relating to our trip to Spiti. Our letters had gone on, they said, and the coolies would probably arrive in three days' time. At first that was an upset, as our time was very short. We were counting on our match with the Monsoon. We had to rush Spiti, and then get back in time to finish our exploration in the Hamta, and then move the base-camp over the Rahtang before we got caught by the first rush of the Monsoon. However, the weather was so unsettled that we felt we ought immediately to have a look at the Gaphan itself, and not merely to reconnoitre it from distant points, and we had three days in hand. As usual, Kulu information said that bad weather seldom or never crosses the Rahtang, and that Lahoul was a practically rainless country; and here was our first view of the Lahoul mountains with evident snow-storms driving across them.

I, for one, was very keen to see the Gaphan at close quarters, so the next day Führer, with his eye glued to a rock peak, one of the Gaphan's nephews—but as usual with nephews, separated by a goodish gap—

Führer, myself, and Lalbahadur, went for a reconnoitring expedition.

A very interesting day it was, too. First we passed the quaint little Koksar monastery, built in a cave above the village, with great cliffs rising behind it—most quaint to look at, and really very sensibly built, as it must get fine protection from the winter winds. It is all breadth, though, and very little depth, and must be rather a narrow abode.

Our way was shown us up a sheep-track into the Damphu Valley—a very steep bit of cliffy hillside cutting us off from the main valley, which is in itself flat, but some fifteen hundred feet above the Chandra River. The outlet of its stream was through a really very fine and deeply cut gorge.

Führer said, 'It's sure to be full of snow. Let us try up there;' and a very fine scramble we had into the bargain. The whole gorge was full of avalanche snow. Where it had tumbled over the waterfalls, it afforded quite jolly little bits of snow-work, and a considerable amount of step-cutting in places; but generally a kick with the boot was sufficient for a step, and we rapidly emerged into the upper valley, still at this time of the year full of winter avalanche snow.

The sides of the valley are very steep. There are immense beds of snow formed in it, but the banks on both sides were clear in places, and after a couple of hours' walk up the valley we turned up to a point of vantage—Führer with a notion of climbing to a small rock peak some three thousand feet above us, and I quite determined that I would do nothing of the kind. However, we got to a little knob at about fourteen thousand feet, from whence we could see

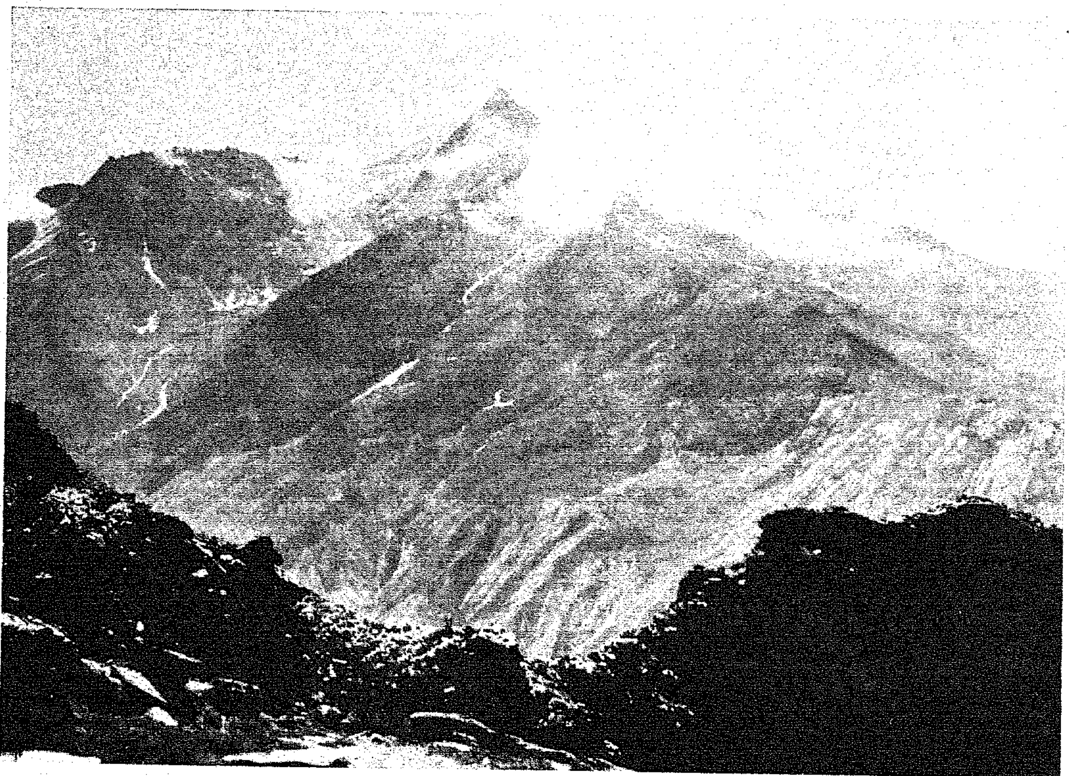
the whole valley, and where we also spent a pleasant and comforting hour over lunch.

I then remarked that, as the Gaphan was what we were aiming at, and that we had to go back and make our arrangements for the next day, and seeing that I had only one pair of legs, one leg a doubtful quantity, I was for home 'one time.' We had, however, seen the whole of the upper part of the valley, and it was extraordinarily fine—many peaks, a cercle at the end, and some really beautiful steep snow faces heading the valley.

The Gaphan is an incident in this great mountain mass—a very fine incident, certainly, but only an incident. Beyond him on the ridge there seemed to be a peak higher and of infinitely finer lines, but I do not mind confessing that great snow peaks and snow faces probably appeal to me with undue force. The Gaphan stands well up in the air, and looks over the Rahtang Pass right down the length of Kulu, and therefore does itself full justice—flaunts itself, one might almost say—while other equally and more deserving peaks modestly hide their heads in the background.

A couple of hours' glissading and trotting down snow-slopes found us back again in the main valley of the Chandra. The scramble down the gorge was even pleasanter than the ascent. It certainly was quite an interesting little walk, and impressive. Also, although the gorge itself was in shade, the upper banks were hot and we had to slip along, as great lumps of frozen snow occasionally broke off.

On our return to our funny little bangalow, the village authorities were assembled, and arrangements



Gaphan Schreckhorn.

were made for our porters to accompany us for at least two nights up the valley. They duly arrived the next morning, a dirty and cheery mixed crowd of men and women. No difficulty or discussion, but a good deal of chaff.

We were a little late in starting, no doubt, but that was of small consequence except from the point of view of warmth; for the avalanche snow in the valley was firm and good and well pressed together, and there was no difficulty in getting up the gorge; indeed, the porters, both men and women, carried their loads with ease up our steps of the day before, negotiating one or two places, awkward for laden people, without trouble.

By two o'clock we had arrived at a suitable bank directly below the main Gaphan ridge, approximately thirteen thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and fairly clear of snow. Everyone was promptly despatched for firewood, or rather scrub. We had heard that this valley usually held ibex, especially before the flocks of sheep and goats arrived, but not a mark could we find, and no signs anywhere of ibex crossing the snow-beds. Altogether I was beginning to lose faith in Lahoul as a sporting centre. The grazing was ample and excellent, and the ground and surroundings thoroughly typical, but not a mark, even of a travelling animal, was to be seen.

That afternoon and evening with our glasses we examined our route to the main ridge, a mighty long way above us, and well smothered in snow; and for once the weather in the afternoon was not so bad.

'We must be off at twelve—midnight,' said Führer;

and, in truth, the bank was long, and the upper part seemed, from where we were camped, particularly steep; also the ridge leading to the Gaphan itself began to reveal its real length.

There is one great point in Himalayan climbing, and, in fact, in all climbing from a gîte: if one has an early start, one can at least get to bed early. Hot soup and bed before dark is the proper procedure.

Führer looked out at 11.30, and reported badly of the weather; but an hour later it cleared, and by 1 a.m. we were well on our way. Führer had not been over and above well, but declared himself fit to start. The morning was very sharp, but now the weather was promising, and everything was in our favour; the snow in excellent condition and not too steep, and we made considerable progress. After about two hours it became apparent that Führer was not himself, though full of hope that he would get better with exercise. By 3.30 the angle of ascent was most accentuated. Some old avalanche tracks, filled with débris, had to be crossed, some rock scrambles to be negotiated, and by 4.30 we were on the very steep slopes that led to the main ridge. Here a traverse across very steep snow-slopes had to be made, and, alas! the snow was in by no means as good condition as lower down, and made me rather doubtful of what our descent would be like. It was most laborious for a few yards—hard and firm snow surfaces, and then a patch of most treacherous stuff, letting one in almost to the thighs. Führer, who was leading, had a very severe time, and it was evident that he was not at all fit. The work was harder than

on the Bara Banghal Pass, the snow more treacherous, the angle steeper, and the altitude very considerable. By 5 a.m. we had reached about seventeen thousand feet, and a traverse across a very steep gully evidently led to a little vallon, which would take us in safety and comparative comfort to the ridge.

Half an hour's struggle took us across this gully to the shelter of some overhanging rocks, where we enjoyed some well-earned rest, and thence to the top. A stiff snow grind finally landed us on easy slopes of hard-frozen snow, leading direct to the ridge, which we attained at 6.30 a.m. The height was approximately eighteen thousand feet.

The final ridge of the Gaphan towered apparently directly above us, but, as was subsequently proved by Führer and Lalbahadur, it is a most deceptive mountain.

The work had been of a most laborious character and Führer was decidedly unwell. He was not suffering from mountain sickness in its ordinary form, but from the effects of very hard work and high altitudes when he was not really in a fit state to encounter them. There is no getting away from altitude. If one is perfectly fit, it has but little effect, but let anything be even a little wrong, and it finds one out at once. This was the only occasion on which Führer was unwell at all, or in any way inconvenienced by the height. It hardly affected him later even when doing very hard work.

The view from our ridge absolutely paid back all the labour we had had to reach it, and the sight of the central Lahoul mountains was glorious. On our

own ridge and facing us was the fine snow peak that I have before mentioned, and to the south-west the very imposing ridge of the Gaphan itself, apparently extremely steep, and, as it seemed to me, a day's work in itself.

Subsequently, when Führer and Lalbahadur made their second attempt, it was not the steepness which delayed them, but the extraordinary windings of the ridge leading to it, now hidden from us at our halting-place.

This mass of central Lahoul, all beautiful, and apparently unnamed, is a perfect centre for unambitious mountaineering, supplying innumerable peaks and climbs, but on a Swiss scale—that is, with regard to glaciers and valley beds. It is only typically Himalayan from the point of view of its height above the sea.

We had a most successful descent, enlivened by one rather startling episode. Lalbahadur is an excellent walker, quite firm and trustworthy on rocks, but for some reason most doubtful on snow, whether from carelessness, which is probable, or from some inability to walk in snow or ice steps, I do not know, but the fact remains. Later on he managed to hurt himself a bit, which did him a deal of good.

At any rate, on our descent, crossing the steep and awkward gully, which I have before mentioned, at the very steepest part, he came out of his steps with a bang; and when we had hauled him up again and got him into other ones, I gave a little pull on the rope to see that all was firm, and it promptly came off him.

If this had occurred two yards sooner he would have

had a most unpleasant tumble; and, though probably he would not have been killed, as the snow eased off two hundred feet lower, he would have been pretty badly knocked about. Luckily, nervousness had not anything to do with his habit, and he soon tied himself up again, and on we went at our best pace, as the sun was on the ridge above us, and little bits of cornice, long icicles, etc., might very shortly be expected to hunt us down that face.

The descent was distinctly tiring. When the angle eased a bit, the snow got very soft in places, but necessity obliged a good pace, and the shelter afforded by a rib of rocks some two thousand feet from the summit took us out of the line of fire, although just as we attained this shelter some big lumps from the cornice took a belated shot at us.

Lalbahadur kept up his record, spraining a thumb on one occasion and breaking one of the Thermos bottles on another.

We gained our little camp at 10.30 a.m., Führer very sorry for himself, but pleased with his performance. Tea and a hot meal did us all good, and another hour's tramp found us back in Koksar, with the weather, as usual, beginning to break up. We found that our men for Spiti had arrived, also a gale or two. So we took counsel together. The weather was most threatening, and the approach of the real rains could not be far distant. I was very anxious to explore with Führer Deotibi and Indra Killah at the head of the Hamta Valley.

If we travelled to Spiti and back there seemed no chance of going there, especially with such bad weather as we were continually experiencing, so I

proposed to cross the Hamta Pass to the foot of Deotibi and to tackle that group immediately, putting off my trip to Spiti until the autumn. This move was quite popular with the porters as giving them much less work.

The next day we followed the left bank of the Chandra River up to old Koksar, a very pleasant march, over broken banks, and passing many flocks of sheep with their picturesque Gaddi shepherds.

At old Koksar we made a very comfortable little camp on grass slopes, and also made friends with an elderly Gaddi who was encamped there, and who gave us a good deal of information about his flocks and his peregrinations. He was a very well-to-do man, and did not remain the whole season with his sheep, employing shepherds to look after them for him. He was great on grasses of all sorts, and very friendly and interesting.

The blue grass of Lahoul certainly seems to fatten sheep wonderfully, and, if you can believe him, the old Gaddi insisted that the grass of the Lingti Plains was even better. When I asked him why he did not take his flocks there, he replied that they all ate so much that they died on the road of a surfeit; in fact, got so fat that it killed them to walk!

The weather was getting worse and worse, and we looked with misgivings at the banks of clouds on the hills to the south and over the Rahtang, expecting a bad walk the next day over the Hamta Pass, nor were we disappointed, for though it was not actually raining in the morning when we left camp, the clouds soon began to descend ominously, and before we had

been on the march two hours we were in thick, driving snow.

Our men knew the road perfectly well, and for the first fifteen hundred feet out of the Chandra River, the approach to the pass, is up an easy valley, no doubt very pleasant walking in fine weather, but quite the contrary in the driving snow, which was especially annoying, as what must evidently be a very fine view at the head of the valley was completely blotted out.

At one o'clock we halted for lunch at the foot of the rise to the pass itself, a very sharp pull of fifteen hundred feet, chiefly up grass slopes, with about five hundred feet of easy but steep snow to the top.

We found a foot of fresh snow, rapidly deepening as we approached the upper slopes. The final five hundred feet had to be treated with care, as the angle was steep and the snow very deep.

Führer found a little ridge, which finally brought him out above the pass, but which offered no risk of starting the fresh snow sliding. It was quite a laborious little scramble, which shows how easily even the simplest places may be changed in bad weather.

We found some Bhotias on the pass, with a few evidently show goats, and they were shortly joined by some Kulu men employed by native officials. However, our path, or rather staircase, up the little ridge did not fill them with confidence, and they all turned back. The descent was over the easiest possible slopes for several miles to the top of the Hamta Valley, and despite interesting surroundings, must be a dreary pull up, even in fine weather.

The snow soon turned to rain, and we were a most

bedraggled crew when at 5 p.m. we arrived at the great overhanging rocks at Chika; where, however we speedily made ourselves comfortable.

Chika is a really beautiful spot. A true alp, with fine forest—the birch forest, one of the most picturesque I can remember.

The Chika camp itself, or rather, gîte, was under an immense overhanging rock, over which water trickled, but so far out that our very considerable camp of Whymper tents remained quite dry, though we had to bolt through the little waterfalls to get out of it.

That evening's confabulation resulted in the arrangement that Führer and Lalbahadur should explore as far as possible in the direction of Indra Killah and Deotibi, while I should go down to Manali and fetch my wife and the main camp, and make arrangements to stop at least a week in the Hamta Valley.

But Nemesis overtook me; my insults to the local gods were not to go unnoticed. Their time had come, and the very nasty-tempered deity who presides over the Hamta was to have his revenge. Besides that, I had not presented him with a small silver horse, which appears to be the only real way to his good graces.

'Jamlu' is his name, and a name extremely respected in Kulu, and I quite agree he is not a person to take liberties with. He had already warned me, and next day he was going to carry out his threat. That day, June 9, was still wet, but showed signs of clearing, so, taking the excellent 'Gopoo,' my half-bred Ladakhi servant, I started off for Manali Bangalow to surprise the main camp, for my wife did not yet know that we had not gone to Spiti.

The great feature of the Hamta Valley is its beautiful scenery. The trees are lovely, not only lovely but well grown. It is a perfect grazing country as well—with charming alps, rich, and full of flowers as a real alp, but Northern Italian rather than Swiss.

The road for two hours descends but little, and is very pleasant walking, ordinarily speaking. But that morning it was too damp to be enjoyable. After about two and a half hours' sharp walking we were able to look right down into the main Kulu Valley, three thousand feet below us, and the weather clearing, we had a very fine view up and down the valley, though our old friends in the Solang Valley were still in clouds, as was also the main Manali Valley which I had wished to explore. We were travelling very fast, and taking every available short cut, as I wanted to get down in plenty of time to engage coolies.

I never saw such slippery banks. Hard, slimy clay, in which our boot nails got little hold. So we left the road and took to the forest and grass slopes, much better travelling.

Finally, on our arrival at the top of some zig-zags, we met a caravan of porters carrying the local Tehsildar's luggage up to Chika. They were having hard work, slipping back nearly as much as they went forward. I was so idiotic as to chaff them, and to keep on jogging at the same time, going carelessly with my axe in one hand.

I am assured that it was Jamlu that pushed me down; but, at all events, I went flying down a clay bank like a streak of lightning, my axe apparently sticking behind, and the whole weight of my body coming on my shoulder. Results, many torn muscles

and a dislocated shoulder, and a long way to go to camp.

I am not likely to forget the scramble down to the valley, nor the subsequent stumble along the road by myself; for, on reaching easier ground I was obliged to send my one servant on ahead for help, the charming people of the two villages that I passed through refusing any form of assistance. Luckily in the Kulu Valley is stationed a Subordinate of the Medical Service, who rode up next morning from Sultanpur, two marches down the valley. Some five days later, on his second visit, he got the shoulder back into place, though the tearing of the muscles was considerably the worse injury of the two, and took a very long time to get properly strong again.

Well, that was the end of my mountaineering for some time. Luckily, being a good healer, I was later on able to do much more than I could possibly have expected, and got a considerable amount of grasping power in my hand and arm below the level of my shoulder, but I did not recover the power of reaching up until too late to join in the more difficult climbs which were afterwards accomplished.

The next thing to arrive at was how to employ the time until Captain Todd's leave started—some four weeks off yet. I wanted to take advantage of Führer's time in the Himalaya, both for his own sake and for the sake of the party. News of the accident was sent up to Führer, who shortly came down, but not until he had happily put in a good piece of high exploration on Deotibi.

Apparently he and Lalbahadur reached two points on the Deotibi ridge after some rather exciting work.

I was shown the points some three months later, and the experience gained would, no doubt, have facilitated our attempt on that peak.

As usual, they were caught in bad weather, and were only too glad to get off the mountain and down to the Manali Bangalow, where we were installed.

We decided that Führer and Lalbahadur should make a thorough examination of the mountains at the head of the Manali Valley, with a view of a subsequent attack on the great Solang Weisshorn.

Now this was an adventurous step, as neither could communicate with the other except by signs; still, Führer was very keen to explore, and they had to make the best of it and each other.

So we fitted them out for a week, and off they went. I must say I envied them, and in the meantime solaced myself with a liberal fruit diet, of which Captain Banon's delicious cherries were an important item. We shall never forget either his kindness or the goodness shown to us through a trying time by Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke.

CHAPTER V

THE SOLANG WEISSHORN

MANALI is situated about six thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and has a delightful climate for the greater part of the year. Certain summer months have too much rain, and, in consequence of the wonderful vegetation and rice cultivation, a plethora of flies and mosquitos.

It is wonderfully fertile, and besides that, is well cultivated. English fruit of every kind does well there—even gooseberries—which I have never eaten in any other part of the Himalaya. In fact, the whole of the Kulu Valley could, with sufficient capital, and given good communications with India, turn out excellent fruit in almost any quantity. In the plantations in Manali, belonging to the Government Forest Department, Spanish chestnuts, lime-trees, and English oak do very well, and no better eating chestnuts could be wished for.

Captain Banon, who owns a charming little plantation in Manali, grows every sort of English fruit and vegetable, and is constantly trying improved varieties both from home and America with success. His cherries, as I before remarked, are a dream.

The neighbouring forest scenery is very fine, and

the deodar-trees enormous. I have seldom seen finer groves of deodar anywhere.

For a damaged man, enjoying, so to speak, rude health and enforced leisure, it would have been hard to find a better place of repose, although we were there in the hottest time of the year. A liberal fruit diet was just what was required for the physical condition, and for an out-of-the-way place like the Kulu Valley we found a pleasant little society.

Besides Captain Banon and his family, there was an officer of the Frontier Force on long leave. Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke, too, who have made their home in Kulu for many years, and to whom we are both mightily beholden for their many kindnesses, were very frequent visitors. They were living in a most charming châlet above the Dungri Forest, from which the views of the Hamta Snows were magnificent. What a perfect summer station could be made round Manali, if only it was within reach of India. Every grade of climate is within easy reach, and a refuge from the rain on the other side of the Rahtang Pass, to say nothing of it as a centre for winter sports, or rather commanding a centre.

Of course, all this is idle speculation and outside the range of practical politics, but all the same one cannot help picturing it and regretting the impossibility.

The Rahtang Pass, of which the inhabitants of Kulu speak with bated breath, is typical ski-ing ground; nowhere near so dangerous in winter, say, as the Monte Moro, and though exposed to violent storms, not more so than, for instance, the Burzil in Kashmir, which is a shade higher and a good deal longer and more exposed. Further, the Rahtang is practically

safe from avalanches compared to the dangerous Burzil country, and nowhere as exposed as many of the Swiss passes, regularly crossed in winter by travellers properly trained and equipped with ski. There are immense possibilities in the Himalaya for ski-ing, if properly taught; but just to throw a number of ski at people who have never seen and hardly heard of them, and say, 'Now, learn and travel,' as has been done on the Gilgit-Kashmir road, is hopeless.

My first ten days in Manali were rather wasted. What really interested me was opium pills, and to find some sort of position to suit the dislocated shoulder. When with difficulty such was found, it did not suit the ruptured muscles, consequently these little mind assistants were called in with great effect. However, after about a fortnight things went better.

Meanwhile the first exploring party had done good work. The Manali Valley is undoubtedly one of the best shooting valleys in Kulu, its southern ridge and banks being easy ground and covered with fine forests, in which are many 'thachs,' or alps, the favourite feeding-ground of the red bear. Above the forest on the southern side are open grazing-grounds, easy to walk over, also excellent for red bear. A route also leads by this southern ridge across the range into Bara Banghal. The northern side of the valley, which directly leads to the great barrier between the Manali and the Solang Valleys, is of the roughest kind. Magnificent forest at the steepest angle and cliffs besides which, no doubt, hold plenty of game, and very probably red and black bear, and tahr also. But it is a very rough country to travel.

It was up this northern side of the valley that

Führer's road lay, and a pretty rough time they had, owing, apparently, to having cut out a road for themselves. However, they carried their camps up very high, and spent three days in the snow at the junction of the Bara Banghal, Manali, and Solang ridges. Their porters stayed below, and were supposed to keep them in supplies, but their arrangements more or less failed. Notwithstanding, from this camp they successfully explored a way which led them on to the main Solang ridge, and thence to the Weisshorn itself. They also ascended two minor points on the ridge, both of which Führer described as very difficult climbing, so that their time was by no means wasted.

By Friday evening they were back, and reported having seen an immense number of Monal pheasants, and of having run into a black bear near camp.

I gave them two days in which to recover, and then fitted them out a better expedition, which should insure proper feeding, and despatched them with my own servant Kehar Sing, and another Gurkha orderly whose business it was to provision the upper camp.

This expedition was one of the successes of the season. They did not repeat the mistakes of the first trip, but pushed up by a better and less tiring route, and again took their upper camp up into the snow to the junction of the ridges, a very high camp for the ground on which they were, and which must have cost many groans from the not too enterprising Kulu coolies before everything arrived.

Thence, on the morning after their arrival, to wit, June 23, they crossed the Bara Banghal ridge and descended for some hundred feet on to the glacier face descending from the Solang ridge, and began a long

and fatiguing snow walk to join the ridge itself. From there, until the main rise to the summit, it appears to have only been a grind of continual hard snow with some ice, but the last eighteen hundred to two thousand feet they reported as very steep; all frozen snow and ice, and requiring the hardest work with much step-cutting.

Führer described the view from the top as something quite extraordinary, and further said that his view of Snowy Peak 'M,' twenty thousand three hundred and sixty-four feet (which we always called the Gundla Peak, quite wrongly no doubt, and on which we had originally had designs from the Solang Valley), would go very well by the southern arête by which it is connected with the Solang northern ridge, if once we could reach the ridge, but that it would require, as we had previously thought, at least a fortnight of clear weather.

This climb was really satisfactory, for the height of the peak alone is considerable—nineteen thousand six hundred feet—and it had offered, if not the most formidable kind of resistance, still ice and snow work of fine quality, and its position is almost unique in Kulu, being the last of the higher peaks towards the south, and being also easily distinguishable from both Phagu and Simla.

They left the summit at about 3 p.m., almost twelve hours after their start, and reached their bivouack about 7 p.m., all going quite well until the final climb of some few hundred feet to the ridge on which their high camp was placed. Here they both had symptoms which exactly resembled mountain sickness as so often described; as a matter of fact, they had no

feeling either of headache or nausea, but suffered from breathlessness, palpitation, and inability to walk for more than a few yards at a stretch. In other words, the effect of height on tired frames.

Now, although the day had been one of sixteen hours, that amount of work would not have affected Führer in Switzerland in the least, but their work had lain between sixteen thousand and twenty thousand feet, a very different matter; and further, I do not think that one always takes into consideration the immense labour it entails to get a high camp up through a rough and difficult valley like the Manali Valley, and all that hard work must leave its mark.

It has to be remembered that their camp was ten thousand feet above Manali, and all very rough going. I merely relate the incident to show how often the effects of fatigue and altitude are mistaken for mountain sickness, and that such symptoms may occur at quite reasonable altitudes if the bodily condition favours them, while they are not experienced at all by men in good condition at very much greater heights.

Führer and Lalbahadur remained two days longer at their high camp, and on the second day put in a first-rate day's rock climbing; one of the finest climbs, Führer said, that he had ever had. They had become much pleased with themselves, and therefore ambitious, and consequently set out to explore two of the main peaks in the Solang ridge, both of which appear at the left hand corner of the ridge as seen from the Solang River. We had been fairly near them on the Solang side, but the usual bad weather had blotted out everything before we could make them out properly,

although we had observed them through glasses from the north side when they were in a smother of snow. My recollection of them was that they had a most formidable appearance.

Führer's account of the climb is that one was like the Aiguille de Charmoz and the other like the Blaitière. He was evidently much gratified. It was the Charmoz that required continued use of the double rope, and the Blaitière that punished—what one might call straightforward climbing.

It seems a big thing to traverse a new Charmoz and a new Blaitière in one day, but their camp was at least sixteen thousand feet, and though the ridge that led to them was largish, the greater part of the twelve hours was spent upon the two peaks.

I could not get any distinct name for these two peaks from any native, so added them both to the Solang-Weisshorn as the Solang-Charmoz and -Blaitière.

The Kulu people are, I think, more indifferent than most natives to names, and certainly points on a long ridge appeal not at all to them. In Lahoul, although it is more sparsely populated, they seem to have more appreciation of their mountains, and to have much information to impart about them.

The Ordnance Survey Map is very confusing about the position of the Weisshorn Peak. There is no other peak of the same height on this ridge, and it is very easily distinguishable, but on the Ordnance Survey Map there is a peak marked of nineteen thousand four hundred and sixty-two feet, about halfway along the ridge, which no doubt is Führer's Blaitière. If this peak is over nineteen thousand feet, then the Weiss-



North Baghal Ridge of Solang Weisshorn.

horn must be approaching twenty-one thousand feet, but it seems to me that the wrong height has been assigned to the Blaitière.

Now, our pass above Beas Kund at the very farthest and most westerly point of the Solang, was almost directly underneath the northern ridge of the Weisshorn (vide the illustration), and our peak on the north of the pass was at the junction of the three water-sheds—Solang, Bara Banghal, and Lahoul—with the Snowy Peak 'M' massif to our north again.

So there was no question of our mistaking our locality. If it turns out that the Blaitière is correctly measured (and I put the height assigned as too high) then Führer's performance on the Weisshorn will have been a notable one. But I cannot imagine any surveyor measuring our Blaitière and leaving out the Weisshorn, and that is where the doubt comes in.

On June 27 they were down again at Manali, to find me now able to creep about, with my arm in a sling, and therefore hopeful once more. They brought more news of bears, and of tantalizing numbers of pheasants, now high up, feeding above the edge of the forest, or in the highest trees, and said they could have had innumerable shots. But that is always the way with Himalayan pheasants, the Monal especially, who always shows himself at the close of the season or when one has not a gun handy. Later on in the season he usually takes to the forest, and in a forest of such thickness as that in the Manali Valley he is hard to get. The other pheasants generally behave a good deal better, especially the Kallidge, who is confiding compared to the other kinds, and frequents much more workable ground as a rule.

Another council of war had to be held on the return of the climbing party. There was still more than a fortnight before Captain Todd could be expected, and the weather was getting worse and worse. It seemed to me that if we wished to attack the Gaphan it should be done at once, for I did not believe that the Monsoon rains would stop short at the Rahtang with such a sleeve and such a current to carry them over, and the Gaphan is exactly opposite the outlet of the sleeve on the other side of the Chandra River.

Our large camp had to be sorted, and only the necessary amount of baggage taken for a three months' stay in Lahoul. But as the weather was more and more threatening, and as I was by no means certain whether I could stagger over the Rahtang, Führer and Lalbahadur were again despatched to have a try at the Gaphan if they could get an opportunity. We were to follow as soon as we could get our transport, stores, etc., together.

So on June 29 the advance party was started, and was told that its first and only duty, with the exception of buying some sheep, was to attack the Gaphan, as it was most unlikely that we should have another chance; for not until the middle of September could we hope to count on settled weather again.

And, indeed, it was full time to get out of Kulu. The only unpleasant time of the whole year was rapidly approaching, and the rains in upper Kulu are no fun: continual mist and downpour for ten weeks straight off, flies, and dampness, whereas within reach lay Lahoul, with its perfect summer climate—albeit by no means so dry a one as we were led to expect. Still, the valley traveller or even the sports-

man is not inconvenienced by weather which is hopeless for the mountaineer. There must be very few days all through the rainy season during which a sportsman need stay in his camp, even on the lower reaches of the Chandra. Heavy rain is uncommon, and clouds do not descend very low, and the farther north one goes the less is the rain, and the lighter the cloud, below a certain altitude, that is to say.

We were glad to leave Kulu at this moment, but looked forward to more delightful wanderings there in the crisp, sunny autumn weather, when the tyranny of the rains should be overpast.

We were not disappointed.

CHAPTER VI

THE GAPHAN PEAKS

On July 2 we were ready to move the whole caravan. It had been an undertaking, as we did not wish absolutely to rough it, and there was no necessity for so doing. So our first march, to Rahla, was only some nine miles: a delightful walk along the banks of the Beas, through great glades of alders, and along an excellent road, over which, with plenty of men, I should not despair of pushing a rickshaw—that is, as far as Rahla Bangalow.

The scenery at the junction of the Beas and the Solang is perfect of its kind, fairly level up to that point, and then a picturesque rise up to the bangalow, after passing through the fine gorge of the Beas.

The road was crammed with travelling sheep and goats and their Gaddi shepherds, to say nothing of traders proceeding to Patseo, the great wool market of Lahoul, which taps the Tibetan trade in wool, borax, and salt. Mostly Mohammedans, these last, settled in Kulu, and very lax Mohammedans at that, having a great respect for the Hindu gods. I am not so sure that I have not myself, by-the-bye!

My half-caste Gopoo was by way of being a Mohammedan and a great authority on gods. He is a youth of real mixed blood. His father, a Gurkha sepoy in

the old Kashmir army, married a Ladakhi, and had a fairly large family. This youth at the age of eleven came trading down to Kulu—wool-trading most probably—with his father and the family, and Gopoo was sent to a Mohammedan family, by whom he was converted. Others of his relations settled in Lahoul, and entertained me right hospitably.

Gopoo was the most cheerful cuss imaginable, and notwithstanding his youthful upbringing in Kulu, had acquired none of the meanness of the men of the main valley.

He had travelled much, knew Spiti and Lahoul well, and what is more, had been with the Tibetan expedition—almost as far as Lhassa. He was a little fond of money, but not more than might be expected, and he certainly saved me a great deal of overcharging from other people, and was always absolutely cheerful whatever happened. He had gone on with Führer to make their arrangements, as Tibetan was required in Koksar if one wished to get 'forarder.' Hindustani would only do at a pinch, and raised no enthusiasm.

My own chief interest in the march was the problem as to whether I could do it or not. Riding was out of the question. The jolting not only would have been unbearable, but would have done actual harm, and I frankly 'funked' being carried; so walking was much the best form of progression. We were taking, besides a 'dandy' for my wife, a pony apiece. A most excellent move, as in that country of a good high road and good grass, it was not only economical but most useful, either for sending letters, or for getting about oneself.

The Lahouli grazing is second to none in India or

the Himalaya, although the first appearance of the country would not lead one to believe this; but like so many countries in the Himalaya and Hindu Koosh, wherever water can be brought the grass and crops are excellent.

We arrived at Rahla, as usual, in threatening weather, without trouble, but the damaged arm very uncomfortable. Bad weather following on a bad night precluded our tackling the pass the next day, for which respite I was intensely thankful. We spent quite a pleasant day notwithstanding, in a capital bangalow amply stocked with light literature, and the delicious cool breezes, damp as they were after the stuffy heat down at Manali, were very refreshing.

It is always worth spending a few days in Rahla if not pressed for time, especially if one has lately come from the plains and wishes to pick up before hard work, for the elevation is, roughly, eight thousand five hundred feet, and the surrounding scenery as stimulating as the climate.

After our one day's halt we were quite ready to be off, and started at the comfortable hour of 8 a.m. on July 4. A very interesting walk led to the old Rahla Bangalow, now fallen into disrepair, but situated directly under the rise to the pass. It is low and shut in compared to the new bangalow. From this point there is a continual rise of some four thousand five hundred feet by an excellent road.

Now, a pull up a pony road at not too steep angle, round and round, in and out, 'zigzag' after 'zigzag,' is one of the most monotonous things in the world, so I took the old stone staircase, which mounts direct for at least one thousand eight hundred feet, with the pre-

caution of taking a helper too in case of a slippery bit. My wife rode her pony, the much-travelled 'Watson,' a quaint but useful beast, and quite to be relied on in his own way.

There is no jar in going up a continuous steep slope when the footing is good, and I got up without trouble to our first lunch place at about two thousand feet above Rahla. From thence to the top is a long drag up—a pony road, with occasional bits of hard avalanche snow to be crossed. The walk was most interesting. Much less snow than when I had crossed it a month before, and, in consequence, the whole hillside was gorgeous with flowers. Also, whenever there was flat ground, and there were many suitable places, there was a Bhotia encampment, and these, with their quaint little blue tents and their droves of carrying sheep, were full of interest, and gave a little touch of Central Asia or Tibet.

The whole hillside was covered with Gaddis and their flocks on their summer migration. No dullness whatever on the road, and always a smile and cheery greeting from the Bhotias, whether Lama or trader. Many Lahoulis, too, were returning north from Kulu, but they were not so picturesque as the Bhotias. Their dull, homespun clothes and curious grass shoes, with long turned-up toes, were not very attractive; but their faces, though very dirty, were always cheery. They do not give one the idea that they are anything but very poor, but that is by no means the case, even in the squalid Koksar villages, as they are great traders, and very enterprising in their way.

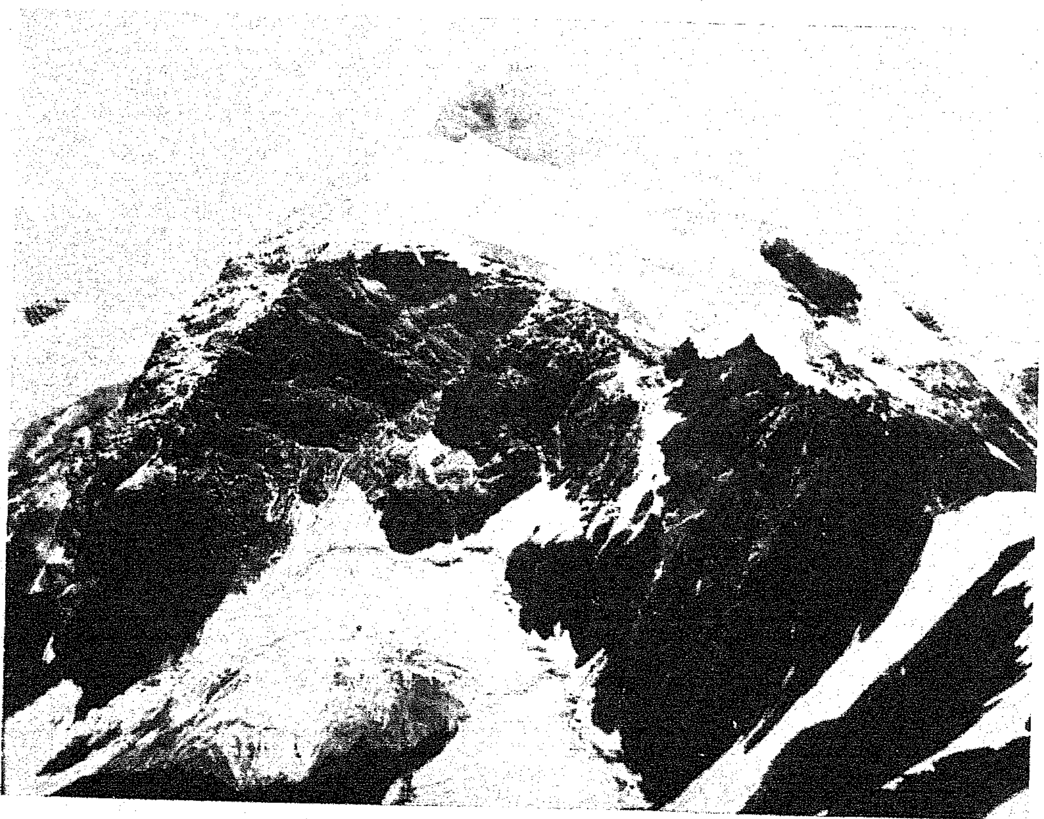
The last hour to the top of the pass I shall remember, as the muscles of my arm quite gave out, and ached

so intolerably as almost to prevent my going on, but half an hour's good massage put it more or less right again, and a good lunch assisted.

We found much less snow than I expected on the north side, but still had to cross a couple of miles or so. It is wonderful to see the way the Lahoul and Spiti ponies take these slopes. They seemed quite at home in the snow, and their riders never seemed to bother.

We arrived at 4 p.m. at my old quarters at Koksar, to find them occupied, however, and we had to pitch our camp, for which I had no regret, excepting for the continual Koksar wind. The weather was evidently rough above, and on our way over we had wondered how our party was getting on. As a matter of fact, they had made their attempt that very day, though, as we had no view, we did not suppose that they would have risked it. However, there was very little choice in the matter of weather, as it clouded over regularly every day about noon. This was most discouraging for them; I, personally, was feeling much pleased, as I had felt no bad effects from my long walk, and no return of the pain, and looked forward to soon being fit enough for the real hillside again.

Not very long after our arrival the climbers were seen returning by our old route, and we were impatient to hear how they had fared, and how the particularly ferocious god who lives in the Gaphan had treated them. Gopoo had warned us about him, saying: 'Gaphan ko deota bara kharab; bara khabrdari karna chahiye' (The Gaphan god is real bad; you must take very great care). And from all accounts he had been at it again. This was their story.



Gaphan Schreckhorn.

They camped in doubtful weather as usual, at our old camping-ground, and started almost at midnight climbing by the route that we had taken, arriving with less difficulty than we had met with before, owing to the snow lower down at our halting-place being in harder condition. Here they breakfasted and had a rest, and then set off on what appeared to be an easy approach to the main peak. This was their first disappointment. After crossing a first hummock just above the breakfast place, they expected to find a direct ridge to the main peak, but no such thing! The most broken, curly, and irritating ridge that ever was seen; no great angle of ascent, but in and out, continual difficulties, awkward places with soft and treacherous snow. Führer said it was most awkward work, and of no interest. Finally, however, they reached the last ridge—one thousand two hundred feet at least of really fine climbing; for the last part of the Gaphan has a most sensational appearance.

The face and ridge on which they were working are at the steepest angle, and the western face goes sheer down on to the Sissu Glacier, an immense rock face. The weather had been very doubtful, and seemed to be getting worse, but Führer told me that there was then, he thought, every chance of its keeping sufficiently fine till midday. He reports it to have been extremely hard work, but very fine climbing—ice and snow, with occasional bits of outcropping rock, their only trouble being that, owing to the heavy cornicing of the ridge, they occasionally had to take to the face. However, when they had passed all difficulties, and when not more, he says, than twenty minutes from the top, they were suddenly caught in a regular

ourmente, which nearly took them off the mountain, and without stopping a moment they fled. They got out of the worst violence of the wind, but bad weather followed them all the way down; and, indeed, they must have had a very poor time, for the Gaphan, in the best of weather, is a mountain to be treated with very deep respect.

Beyond the Gaphan is its second or lower head, connected with it by a small col. It might be possible to climb up from the Sissu Glacier on to the col, but would require the very finest of leading and icemanship. Under these conditions it might be feasible, as far as I could see.

The lower peak seemed to be very hard to get at or to climb, and certainly was not possible from the Sissu Glacier nor via the col.

On the same ridge, and some three miles probably farther along it, is a third Gaphan of almost the same height as the lower head of the true Gaphan; a well-situated and beautiful point, about which more anon.

Among other interesting information volunteered me in Kulu was a tale that the Gaphan had been climbed by a climber alone to within five hundred feet of the top; and again I was informed by another traveller that he had ascended it from Sissu, also apparently alone. Magnificent statements both of them. I must say that I quite sympathize with the god who lives up there in putting obstacles like sudden *tourmentes* into the way of travellers when he is treated with such disrespect. Now, nothing would induce me to throw doubt on such statements as these, so seriously made, but I will bet myself to traverse Mont Blanc, employing only the side or

closing step—a triumph of pure militarism—if either of these feats are repeated by anyone. One last word. To traverse Mont Blanc by the side or closing step would no doubt take time, and would probably be boring after the first week, but yet it is a possibility, although people might think one had been bitten by a mad Sergeant-Major.

A day of rest was secured, during which we perfected my wife's 'dandy' on a pattern new to us, which necessitated only two men instead of four as carriers—a great convenience, but only suited to light weights. All that is required is a bamboo pole and a 'dhurrie,' or small cotton mat (or even a hammock), which is firmly fixed to either end of the pole, and so slung that one side of the hammock is rather higher than the other; this gives support for the back, as the person occupying the dandy sits in the middle of the hammock, with the feet hanging down, the arms resting on the pole. It is a very comfortable way of getting about, and, my wife says, far less tiring than the ordinary dandy carried by four men, besides being easy to carry over much narrower paths than is possible with the usual pattern.

The Gurkhas spent the day fishing, and it is extraordinary what a quantity of fish they took. Excellent eating, too; fish known as snow trout, but I believe really a barbel. They were caught in little side streams, into which they came from the main Chandra River. The river at this time is, of course, in full flood, the water icy-cold, and absolutely muddy; but evidently this does not prevent these fish from staying in the river.

Latterly we found other places, and were able to

make quite large bags of the same fish, and mightily enjoyed them. A great treat in a country where mutton or goat is the only diet.

We had made up our minds, if we could both manage the march, to go for a night or two up the Sonapani Glacier, and photograph the evidently fine peaks that lie at its head. This was now freshly considered, as the walking looked pretty easy and within my power if careful. We had had a fine view of the Sonapani Glacier from this side of the Rahtang, but not of the peaks.

The valley was evidently worth a visit. It was supposed to hold ibex, but not for me at that time. We had a very pleasant, typical Lahoul walk, a slantwise ascent over grazing-grounds without one tree, but plenty of blue grass and lots of sheep and shepherds, and, finally, after some scrambling, made a very pleasant camp on the summit of an old terminal moraine.

The main Sonapani Glacier has retired some two miles from this moraine, leaving a flat, so cut up with watercourses, and so level, that on occasions of rapid melting or heavy rain it must almost form a lake. Unluckily, the valley made a bend to the right some distance ahead of our camp, and we were therefore cut off from a view of the upper glacier.

Führer and Lalbahadur started at an early hour to explore the upper valley. I have always regretted that I was unable to go with them. But besides having a bad arm, I was out of condition, quite tired from the walking of the day before, and only too pleased to lie about on the grassy banks, read, and admire the view.

The explorers had a very fine time, and got into a circle of really beautiful ice peaks and glaciers—'at least, quite respectable glaciers,' said Führer—all flowing down to join the Sonapani.

They also had some scrambling up some rather steep slopes, and Lalbahadur, as usual, distinguished himself by tumbling out of his steps when the party were roped, and had a real good tumble this time, hurting himself, I am glad to say, quite enough to make him think; pure carelessness, of course.

We had a very nice walk back the next day after our picnic. Our Koksar coolies had been most amusing —cheerful during the day, and equally cheerful during the very cold evening round their bits of fires. I was anxious to see how they managed at night, as they appeared to have no extra covering except a small blanket, which they wound round their waists, and they made no attempt to provide shelter for themselves. The nights at this height, twelve thousand feet, were very cold, and there was always plenty of fresh air moving. But this was their rather surprising mode of procedure. First, when they were ready for bed, they took off every particle of clothing, spread the smallest garments on the ground, and lay down on them, pulling the remainder over them, in a bunch. They appeared to be perfectly warm and comfortable, and were up, dressed as usual, bright and early in the morning.

Our next move was down the Chandra to Sissu: an easy march, which reminded me much of Baltistan or Suru—typical of the northern slopes of the Himalaya. The views of the range south of the Chandra were truly magnificent. The steepness and prodigiousness

of the faces is wonderful, though not to compare with the portion of the road west of Sissu, which is really worth a journey in itself to see, and of which more later on.

Sissu is a typical Baltistan village. The houses are squalid, but the little bangalow is in a charming spot, with plenty of water running close to it under willow-trees, which are accounted for by this stream, which produces also the delightfully green grass.

It is not Lahoul: true Lahoul we had not seen yet, and the Lahouli villages and houses are very superior in structure. It is quite true, as Colonel Tyacke remarks in his book on Kulu and Lahoul, that the true Lahouli has ideas of sanitation in his villages of which dwellers in Kulu have no conception.

We made a delightful little camp at Sissu. We had been accompanied on our march from Koksar by Mr. McMinn, superintendent of post-offices in the Kangra district. He has to visit all his outlying post-offices once a year—a very pleasant trip, I should imagine, as the Kangra district includes Kulu, Sera, and Lahoul, and, I think, Spiti; not that there is a post-office in Spiti.

CHAPTER VII

THE SISSU AND GUNDLA PEAKS

OUR chief business in Sissu was to await Captain Todd's arrival, which was timed for July 12 as nearly as we could calculate. If I had been a fit man I could not have wished for a better centre than Sissu. As it was there was plenty of employment. The village is situated on a bench some four hundred feet above the bed of the Chandra River, which hereabouts is very wide, and is exactly opposite the great massif of the Gundla Peak, Snowy Peak 'M' of the Survey Map. The northern aspect of this great peak is striking beyond words, and Führer was extremely keen to explore its many valleys, and find out whether a way could be forced to the main ridge, which is also the northern boundary of the Solang Valley.

So prodigiously steep and difficult is the north face that it seemed very doubtful whether there was a way up any of these valleys for more than a mile or so from the river; so it was settled that, as we had a good many days at our disposal, some of them at any rate should be given up to a preliminary exploration of the left bank of the Chandra River.

Meanwhile the little Buddhist monastery, five hundred feet or so above Sissu, was *en fête*; and it

was certainly worth our while to see how the Lahoulis amused themselves.

The monastery itself is a very small one, but of the usual Buddhist type, and the Lamas the usual cheerful, comfortable type of Buddhist priest, not ascetic by any means—in fact, anything but that!

The Lama of the Koksar Monastery was one of the first to arrive, a regular Friar Tuck in build and face, burly and red-faced, and just as fond of his tipple. Soon quite a fine collection of people arrived from neighbouring villages, and were joined by most of the Gaddi shepherds from the hillsides and the traders who were passing—all sorts of people, Spiti men, Kulu merchants, and Kulu shepherds, until there must have been some four or five hundred people assembled, a very fair crowd for such an out-of-the-way place as Sissu.

The Lamas of the monastery had made great preparations—cauldrons of tea, and 'chaktri' or 'loogri' and rice—and soon everyone, after having made their bow to the Buddhist deities and to the Lamas, set to work to enjoy themselves. The dancing was preceded by a procession of Lamas in their best robes, headed by a small but typical Buddhist band, and followed by a very small but quite entertaining devil dance, not to be compared, however, either in dress or in style and detail, with the magnificenec of the real show that we later on witnessed in Kyelang, the capital of Lahoul.

The dancing of the Lahoulis is much more cheerful, and shows a much greater sense of humour than the Kulu dancing—compared to this the Lahouli is a wild orgy—but even so it is dull, very slow, with few



Band at Sissu Gonpa.

figures, and we soon had enough of it. Although we left long before sundown, the loogri had already begun to tell. Most of the people in these hills drink to excess whenever they get the opportunity, and certainly not least the Lahouli. He, however, has less—or makes less—opportunity than the men of the main Kulu Valley. His fêtes and fair-days are few and far between, while the Upper Kulu man probably never misses a week throughout the summer.

Besides loogri the Lahouli drinks a grain spirit, not very fiery, but much stronger and much more palatable than the loogri. This he takes daily, probably with his food, and considering the severity of the winter in Lahoul, no one would grudge it him in moderation. The winter months must be a great trial; there is hardly a village below ten thousand feet, and, besides, the snowfall is very heavy.

At the season about which I am writing there is probably no finer climate in the whole of the Himalaya—a light and always fresh air, and, for some reason or other, a mild sun. In fact, I do not think that any of our party wore a sun-hat the whole time we were in Lahoul. We had hoped to start our first exploring party the next day, but most of our coolies were *hors de combat*, and wanted a day to recover in.

Führer and I took the opportunity of walking up the mountain slopes behind the village to look around, for there was much that we wanted to see up the Sissu Glacier, and we wished besides to get a view and photograph of the prodigious cliffs of Peak 'M.' Also it was necessary for me to get myself back into condition, although my arm was still in a sling and a 'swinger.' Luckily the going, though

steep, was absolutely easy, and we got to a height of approximately fifteen thousand feet. We were well repaid for our trouble. First and foremost we got a fine view of the third peak of the Gaphan. 'A Schreckhorn,' said Führer at once, but a Schreckhorn of close on nineteen thousand feet, a peak of beautiful lines, and in a perfect situation overlooking the whole of the great Sissu Glacier to the north, and of course commanding the whole face of Peak 'M' and the Northern Solang boundary range. Führer was immensely keen to try it. We also saw for the first time the more westerly face of Peak 'M,' hidden from us at Sissu. I have seldom seen such imposing and hopeless precipices, a magnificent piece of mountain sculpture, but not for the foot of man; some eight thousand feet of gigantic pitches, every little valley being filled up with hanging glacier at the steepest angle, from whose ends broke off continual small ice avalanches. The upper ridges seemed equally uncompromising, all of the boldest and steepest scale. We had also a good look at the valley to the east—the big peak, in fact, in front of our Sissu camp—and Führer had hopes of finding a way up there, either by forcing a passage through the glaciers and the icefalls which filled their upper ends, or by turning movements on the ridges which divided them. By this means a col could be reached which evidently connected with the narrow ridge which we had seen from the Pindri Peaks, and which led to the top without any very great difficulty.

The exploration of these small valleys was clearly what should next be undertaken, and so we promptly descended to collect our porters, who we had every

hope would by now have sufficiently recovered. Luckily they were all fit and well again, and in the morning the usual mixed crowd of men and women arrived and carried off a small and light camp over the rather clumsy rope bridge which connects Sissu with the south bank.

The two Gurkhas and Führer made a good exploration over a great deal of ground, finding even the lower ends of the glaciers very much more difficult to negotiate than they had expected; but Führer thought he had found a ridge which, though long, would take him finally to the high col, so on his return was not downcast as I had expected. I must say that the way he pointed out to me did not strike me as very promising.

As there was still no news of Captain Todd, Führer wished, like the enthusiast that he was, to make an attempt on the Gaphan Schreckhorn.

In this I really envied him, but that could not be helped, and I had to solace myself with my usual occupation of watching my servant Kehar Sing catching fish in the small backwater below the bangalow. This little pond was most useful to us, supplying us with snow trout during our stay in Sissu.

On our previous exploration Führer had made pretty certain of the right way to tackle the peak. It is an isolated point of which the ridges are the evident lines of approach. The south ridge, which was easily examined from our position, was hopeful, so he proposed to take a light camp as high as possible. So, leaving Sissu on the morning of July 10 with the two Gurkhas as before, he set out for what turned out to be one of the best preformances of the whole

of our trip. We were considerably puzzled as to how he had managed the last exploration, as both he and the Gurkha had only one word in common, and that word 'pickel,' a relic of Zurbriggen's teaching in 1892. 'Pickel' for an ice-axe was taught by him to the Gurkhas who were with me on Sir Martin Conway's expedition to the Karakoram, and has stuck ever since.

Gurkhas seem to have a way of making themselves more or less understood; they certainly have long conversations with British soldiers without apparently feeling the want of a vocabulary. It must have been very difficult for Führer, though, when he wanted to have anything done quickly or to correct a mistake, and must have added greatly to the many obstacles he had to combat. We awaited the return of the party with considerable anxiety, or rather excitement, as I was very keen for them to succeed. If we had not been able to bag the Gaphan itself, this was at any rate the next best, and as a mountain quite its equal, whether considered as a climb or as a magnificent point of view.

On the evening of the following day they duly returned, and with the peak in their pockets, a most satisfactory result.

They had had a very long day and a most magnificent climb, and Führer is again to be congratulated on a very fine piece of mountaineering. Two months later, on our return through Sissu, I scrambled with the two Gurkhas up to the point marked sixteen thousand seven hundred and twenty-three feet on the Survey Map, and was from there able to follow the whole of their route, while they described to me how they had done it.

Not only had Führer led them up by the route he had marked, but, on arrival at the top, had traversed it, and finally joined a westerly ridge, down which he had led them. From my position the men were easily able to point out the different divisions of the climb. It appeared to have afforded every variety of work, and must have been a most interesting expedition; good snow and ice work, and a considerable amount of rock climbing. One of the orderlies pointed out to me the sharp pitch near the summit where Führer had been obliged to stand on his head to reach a handhold. The hardest part of the whole climb was the traverse along the top of the peak to the westerly ridge, during which a very sharp and awkward descent had to be made on to the face of very steep ice, and steps cut across it. The descent must have been awkward also for Führer, as Lalbahadur is always doubtful on ice, and the other orderly, though much safer, was then quite a beginner, and had only once before been on a rope—namely, on the day on which they had made their exploration on the south bank of the Chandra River.

However, they came off without any trouble, and were much elated. So was I, although I had only climbed the mountain by proxy.

A libation of ginger wine was offered to the mountain gods—only offered, much more worthy personages swallowed it.

The following day we entered on the second and greater phase of our expedition, for towards evening certain figures appeared at the far corner of the road leading in the direction of Koksar, and all doubts were soon settled by the appearance of 'the Batcha'

in front. He was the smallest and most comfortable member of the expedition and added one more shape —that of a black Cocker spaniel—to the menagerie!

With Todd came two more Gurkhas, one of whom, Chandra Sing, was the only one who had had any previous experience of mountaineering, in the sense of climbing snow-peaks with apparatus, rope, and ice-axe, etc. The second orderly, very lusty and young, had all the making of a mountaineer if opportunity came his way.

The party was thus mightily strengthened, and Führer much cheered at having someone to climb with again with whom he could carry on a conversation, and indeed it must have been a trying performance working so long practically in silence.

The next day porters were again engaged, and a considerable caravan set out to attempt to reach the great col leading to Snowy Peak 'M'—a nasty, impersonal designation, 'M.' The 'Gundla Peak' suits it much better, for the centre of the massif and the finest faces are directly in front of Gundla, which was the next stage on our way to Kyelang.

Führer had marked a place for the camp on his previous reconnaissance, and proposed to climb to the col by a most unpromising rock ridge to the east of it. On the early morning of July 14, Todd, Führer, and Chandra Sing started up the ridge, and a very rough time of it they had. After the very hardest work, lasting many hours, they were obliged to give up, having made no impression on the ridge whatever. The rocks were at the steepest angle at which rotten rocks could hang together, and the whole was broken up into a series of gendarmes. Under the conditions

about forty-eight hours of continual climbing might or might not have landed them somewhere on the great barrier. It shows the difficulty of the north face of the Gundla massif, when for quite twelve miles this was the only route which apparently offered a chance of approach to the peak from the north side. The fact, however, remains that any properly constituted party, equipped to sleep high, or to climb for twenty-four hours at a stretch, and given plenty of settled weather, can climb this magnificent mountain from the Solang; but, as I before pointed out, any attempt this year would have been foolhardy in the extreme, for even now on the Lahoul side the weather was always threatening, and very often bad, certainly not at all what we had been led to expect.

On the whole the party were satisfied with their performance. They certainly had the very roughest work, and it was a good training for the Gurkha. The party, in fact, had got into each other's stride.

Arrangements had meanwhile been made to move the whole caravan on to Kyelang. I was very anxious not to lose time. The Monsoon evidently crossed the ridge into the southern part of Lahoul, and one could see every day masses of clouds surging up over the barrier ridge. There was nothing to be done where we were, although we left the country with regret, as we had had great hopes of making an exploration of the Upper Sissu Glacier, and also of a great mass of mountains to the west and south of the junction of the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers which filled in the western end of the valley from Sissu. A magnificent group, and second only in boldness of

outline to our Gundla Peak; but Todd had little time to waste, and much the safest step was to push back as far as possible towards the Tibetan frontier.

So we determined to make for Kyelang by a double march, and thence to the market-ground of Patseo, at the head of the Bhaga River, and to explore most attractive country in the neighbourhood of Patseo and the Baralacha Pass. All the information that I had received pointed to absolutely fine weather so far north, and this time I was very hopeful.

I really believe that 1912 was an exceptionally wet year, but clouds at any rate came back as far as the Baralacha, and gave both rain and snow, although I must allow the rain was not very heavy nor the falls of snow high up very deep, and that they caused us much less inconvenience than might have been expected, the truth being that, although they arrived, they had been drained of most of their moisture in the Kulu Mountains.

We heard afterwards that the Monsoon in Kulu had been exceptionally heavy in the upper part of the valley, and I cannot imagine that the condition was normal, for we were quite on the borders of the almost rainless country. In fact, even in winter the snowfall at Patseo is light, although in Kyelang itself the snow lies very deep. Our augmented caravan was now very considerable, and although Lahoulis are the most willing and obliging of hillmen, there are very few of them at the best of times, and in the summer they and their ponies are most of them off trading—carrying grain, cloth, etc.—to the wool-market at Patseo, or farther over the Baralacha to Leh in Ladakh, and even into true Tibet.

In consequence we did not get the whole caravan off until two o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th. My wife and Führer, escorted by the Gurkhas, with several mule-loads, had gone ahead during the morning, and when Todd and I started we were not quite certain whether they would stop at Gundla or push on to Kyelang, a full eighteen miles from Sissu.

When we started we comforted ourselves with the idea that there was, as we had been led to believe, a direct short cut from Gundla into Kyelang over the hill, so that we should very likely catch them up even if they had gone on. This information was delusive, as will be made plain. The road to Gundla, dull in itself but an excellent road, is redeemed by the marvellous aspect of the great cliffs of the Gundla Peak, opposite to which we travelled the whole way.

The hillsides out of which our road had been made were of the dullest description of Tibetan country, the only interest on the road itself being that as we neared Gundla we passed the first really typical Lahoul houses. They reminded one of European homesteads. The first few I saw I imagined must belong to some headman or other, but soon found out my mistake.

They are very massively built, and evidently much superior, both in cleanliness and comfort, to any houses we had yet seen. Much trouble, too, is spent on the fields, which were well cultivated, and wherever water could be conveyed there was also a rich crop of grass, also some trees, chiefly willows.

Gundla itself is really wonderfully situated, and has quite a considerable amount of flat ground in its neighbourhood.

The house or tower of the Thakur (headman), six or seven stories high, reminds one of a feudal castle, as it no doubt once was. The valley had widened out a good deal, and in consequence the general view and setting would be hard to equal.

One has a most striking view of the Ghoosa Cone and the mountain masses to the west which I have before mentioned, and which separate Bara Banghal and Chamba territory from Lahoul.

There is also a very comfortable Government bangalow, to which we hastened, hoping to find possibly our party and at any rate lunch—a tea-lunch, for it was now 5 p.m. We found only a few stray mules, the main camp had gone; but an excellent lunch had been left, and we were comforted. So comforted were we that we began to grow restless, goodness knows why; but we both came to the conclusion that it would be a good thing to try that short cut.

The number of idiotic things that I have done in my life must by now be considerable, but anything worse than the step we now took I do not think I have ever equalled. I think we were both really pleased at the idea of getting off the high-road, so we decided that the information about the short cut must be right, as the people seemed generally agreed that this road was used.

Below the village is a great peninsula of mountains that runs down to the junction of the Chandra and Bhaga, with an evident pass over it, directly above the village, but at least four thousand five hundred feet above it.

Why two ordinarily more or less sane people

should think they could climb to this pass and descend the other side, starting at 6 p.m., and still get in quicker than if they had kept to the high-road, is beyond me, especially as the bigger idiot of the two had his arm in a sling. At any rate, four of us did start off up very steep banks, and arrived at the pass at 9 p.m. It was absolutely pitch dark, and bad weather was rapidly coming on. Strange to say, we had not forgotten to take a lantern with us. I also had for once brought a waistcoat, but no coat. My ordinary walking costume is light, and seldom includes these luxuries.

We had annexed an old man who knew the road, but it grew so dark that as soon as we began to descend he lost it, and we had to find one for ourselves. Meanwhile it began to rain in torrents, and all we could see were certain twinkles of light, apparently about two thousand feet below us in Kyelang.

I thought that night was never going to end. I had to go with the greatest possible care, as a slip would probably have damaged my mending fin badly; in consequence I expect I delayed the party a good bit. However, at about one o'clock we came bang up against a village quite unexpectedly, though unfortunately found it empty; but shortly, after much more scrambling about steep banks, we ran against another, and, after much yelling and chaff, produced a sleepy man, who took us in tow, piloting us down the very steepest of tracks to a small bridge over the Bhaga, from which a sharp ascent brought us into Kyelang and to the Government bangalow by 2 a.m., the most bedraggled crew, absolutely wringing wet, and covered with mud.

Our pass, thus made, is called the Tilbu-ri, or, on the map, the Rang-ka-la, and is marked at fourteen thousand eight hundred feet.

We heard afterwards that it forms part of a short cut, but not to Gundla; the short cut runs directly to Sissu across the hillside.

It may or may not be short—I have my doubts—but the view of the grand mountain masses on every side must make the point of view from the pass by daylight a marvellous one.

The Lahouli who had brought us down was much tickled at the whole performance, and so was the man with us, and also the excellent Gopoo. Everything seemed to amuse this creature. The whole incident afforded considerable amusement at our expense for some time to come. All the same, we made a most excellent dinner, quickly produced by the advance party, and were comfortably in bed by 4 a.m. We spent the next day exploring Kyelang and repacking our outfit. We had also to engage transport, etc., and communicate with the Government representative, the hereditary Thakur of Lahoul, and last, but by no means least, to call on and make the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. Schnabel of the Moravian Mission, who have been settled in Kyelang for several years. In fact, we spent a most interesting and useful day.

Kyelang is delightful. It is the only considerable settlement in Lahoul, and owns a small bazaar, a Tehsil, and a post-office.

There is really a certain amount of room round it, on both sides of the Bhaga, and considerable cultivation. There is plenty of soil, and excellent soil too; consequently the crops are magnificent, though I am

told that there is barely sufficient for the population, and that grain has often to be brought over from Kulu. As one rounds the last bend of the high-road, Kyelang reveals itself in a bower of green willow-trees and verdant fields, thanks to the skilfully cut out watercourses.

Later on, after the departure of Führer and Captain Todd, my wife and I spent some time in Kyelang, and therefore I will put off a further description of its surroundings to a later chapter.

Patseo is a desert, boasting no village. The nearest one is some way below it, and when once the wool-market is over, there is not a soul left, and it relapses into its normal desert state.

A certain amount of grain can be bought from the traders, but naturally they only bring really enough for their own requirements. However, everyone was very obliging and helpful, arrangements were soon made, and our caravan once more started off comfortably on July 18, the transport consisting of men, women, and ponies.

Travel is easy enough in Kulu, but the porters there are usually grumpy and complain of their loads, besides clamouring for backsheesh. We found the Lahoulis much pleasanter and much better carriers, and never—well, hardly ever—a grumble, and seldom a demand for backsheesh; they got some at times, though. They are not a robust people to look at, nor very muscular, but are undoubtedly tough and strong.

Our first stage to Jispa, a longish march, was very pleasant. The hillsides were covered with pencil cedar, of which round Kyelang and up to and beyond Jispa there are quite considerable forests. Also for some three miles after leaving Kyelang one passes through picturesque villages and cultivation, with large water-courses flanked by willow-trees, which reminded me of Gilgit and Chitral.

Todd was very gloomy over the weather, and it looked so thick that my belief in the dryness of the Tibetan border was considerably strained. Meanwhile, it afforded us a good marching day, cool and without sun, and just enough mist to remind one of home.

At Jispa the river widens out, and in consequence there were several shallow channels. We thought that at any rate the water would not be colder here than it had been at Koksar, so our fisherman, Kehar Sing, was despatched, with the result that everyone enjoyed an ample fish dinner, enough being left over for breakfast next morning.

From Jispa to Darcha is about four miles, the road crossing the remains of a fearsome stone avalanche. In fact, not so very many years ago, the whole hillside must have swept across the valley.

The Darcha bridge crosses the Kahdo Topo stream, which brings down nearly as much water as the Bhaga itself. Up this stream runs the road to Zaskar, over the Shingo Là, the main thoroughfare—if it is possible to call a very rough path and a sixteen thousand feet pass a thoroughfare—between Zaskar and Kyelang. From thence the road ascends gradually for eight miles to Patseo, the scenery growing more and more Tibetan in character.

Opposite Darcha, on the left bank of the Bhaga River, there are fine rocks and cliffs and broken mountain-side, and here, if anywhere in this part of Lahoul, ibex should be found. But I saw no signs in Lahoul of really shootable ibex, neither tracks nor old heads put up on houses, the usual custom, and I should imagine from all that was told me, that a forty-inch ibex was quite the outside measurement to be found in the whole country. Although we had travelled over a great deal of reputed ibex ground, and were to travel over more, none of the party saw any ibex worth shooting.

On the mountains which form the boundary of

Kulu there is no doubt a fair sprinkling of red bear, otherwise I doubt very much whether a visit to Lahoul for sporting purposes alone would be worth while.

On one's first arrival, Patseo strikes one as deadly dreary, and it is only relieved by the numerous camps of the Bhotia traders and their flocks. For a wilderness it made quite a busy scene. With the usual exaggeration, we were told by Gopoo that there would be at least eight or nine hundred encampments of Bhotias, besides the Kulu traders, but, being forewarned and by now accustomed to this way of putting things, we were really pleasantly surprised to find that there were at least fifty.

There is also a little bangalow, more substantially and conveniently built than a refuge, and certainly a great boon at this out-of-the-way place and at this height—roughly, twelve thousand three hundred and fifty feet.

Here we made our headquarters during our subsequent explorations of the mountains in the vicinity. We had also to victual ourselves—no very easy job—and to lay in stores of wood, for at Patseo itself there is no firewood obtainable, and coolies had to be despatched for a considerable distance to collect it.

Sheep also had to be found, for the carrying-sheep is a bit too tough for eating, and naturally the traders are by no means keen to part with their transport. Some Mohammedan traders come yearly and do a large business, chiefly in wool, and therefore are prepared for a long stay.

We spent a good deal of time watching the Bhotia camps. The Tibetan traders drive their animals

down, and, in general, shear them on arrival at Patseo, when the wool is promptly stacked, and later on wound up into ropes and then twisted into bales, either for pony or sheep carriage. We did not find it much easier to buy the wool-sheep either for food, nor were they of much use, as their long marches from the higher Tibetan plains, often through a country where there is little grass, had made them very thin indeed. The wool is apparently of fair quality; the fleeces are immense, but very loose, and probably each fleece is nowhere near as heavy as the much more thickly packed European fleeces. Great, and I believe successful, efforts are now being made to cross the Gaddi sheep with the best strains of Merino, but it will be a very long time before the Tibetan sheep is improved.

Besides the wool trade there is a large amount of borax and Tibetan salt bartered for grain, cloth, and green tea, in which there is a considerable business with the Kangra Valley.

We quite made friends with one very fine Tibetan merchant, who had a large encampment, and who employed several servants, shepherds, etc.—evidently a wealthy man. Also, which shows what long distances the Tibetans travel, we found an acquaintance among the traders, who had come all the way from Darjeeling, and who was immediately recognized by my servant. He had either married money and set up as a trader, or had got an opening in the wool trade and been successful; but I think the former was the fact. We found two or three others who spoke Nepalese, to the Gurkhas' great amusement.

There were also travelling Lamas who gave us a

variety entertainment, a kind of semi-devil dance, concluding with tremendous magic. After suitable incantations, the very elderly head of the troupe lay on his back, while another Lama, having placed a large and shaly slab of stone on his stomach, proceeded to hammer it until it broke. It was fairly neatly done, but there was little doubt that the ends were held up, so that little damage was done to the old gentleman's rather skinny middle. After this the collecting plate, one of their brass cymbals, went round the congregation—for a small crowd had been attracted, and were sitting on the ground in a semi-circle. Chandra Sing led off with a two-anna bit, followed by numerous Tibetans and Lahoulis, all of whom, to our surprise and joy, donated a pin or a needle. Why, I failed to understand, but the Lamas seemed quite pleased. The two-anna bit and our one rupee were the only coins among a bundle of pins and needles.

Meanwhile our woodstack was collecting, and we should soon be ready to start. There is a plethora of mountains surrounding Patseo, but the Survey Map certainly does not do justice to the country. At the same time, considering the gigantic amount of virtually uninhabited country lying between Ladakh and Tibet, having no importance at all to anyone but the occasional sportsman or traveller, I do not see how it would be possible to make a map on the lines, say, of the Swiss Siegfried map or the present Government map.

On the right bank of the Bhaga, and directly overhanging Patseo, are immensely steep banks, overtopped by what appeared to be an ordinarily fine

rock peak of no particular dimensions. So foreshortened was its aspect, that after our entertainment was over, about eleven o'clock, Führer and Todd set out to see if they could find a way up it, and also in the hopes that they might climb it. Thus began the first attempt on Maiwa Kundinoo.

The hard dry air and general sameness of colouring had much to do, no doubt, with our inability at first to take in the scale, as well as the foreshortening of the peak; but after their subsequent experience we often laughed at ourselves. They travelled a tremendous pace up about three thousand six hundred feet of steep grazing banks and rock débris, and tackled the first apparent rib of rock leading to the main peak.

They must have got to over seventeen thousand feet before they turned back, and had just begun to taste the real quality of their undertaking. Even on their return, although they gave a great account of the peak, they thought another two hours would have seen them to the top.

The peak had to be bagged anyhow; that was a certainty and a necessity; still, although they allowed that they had not even yet had a real view of their way, they did not imagine they would have any difficulty.

On July 22 we started off with a camp and supplies sufficient for three days, for they had caught glimpses of many mountains and large glaciers to the north, and were eager to explore them. This time I made one of the party as camp-master, as I was now able partially to use my arm, and employed my sling only as a rest. We camped on a moraine-covered glacier directly under the peak, at a height of fifteen thousand



Maiwa Kundinoo and Kundini.



Lahoul Mountains from Kakti.

feet, and directly under their route of the previous day, and spent the evening struggling with the primus stoves. The primus stove is like the little girl with the little curl. When it is good it is very, *very* good, etc.; but it is so very seldom good, and when it is peculiarly horrid it blows up. It was peculiarly horrid that evening.

Even from our camp, which was not very well situated for views, we got a fine outlook towards the Baralacha Pass, and over the main massif of Lahoul. We were also much attracted by the peaks at the head of Patseo nullah, and hoped later on, if we could reach them, to get a fine view over both Lahoul and Spiti. I am glad to say we were not disappointed.

Meanwhile we made our plans for the morning. Führer, Todd, and Chandra Sing were to be off betimes, and I and the rest of the Gurkhas were to take the camp across the glacier we were on, cross a steepish rock-ridge and another glacier behind it, and find a suitable camp near the base of a very fine peak, part of which Todd and Führer had observed during their previous reconnaissance.

I felt really on my legs again, having at last cut a step or two, and held tight—a very great advance.

Before dark we crept into our tents—Todd and Führer in one, and myself alone in another. Führer's oft-repeated remark, 'Oh, Major Bruce, you do snouch so!' accounted for this. I don't always snouch, but when I do I snouch to some purpose. Anyhow, I'm glad I've got that word—glad that I snouched so as to find out what snouching was.

The climbing party left in the night, and the luggage and attendants when it was sufficiently light to cook

and eat and pack in comfort. Quite a scramble took us up to the ridge, when some time was spent in photography. Here I saw for the first time what the party was in for, and I must say was duly impressed. The ridge looked most uncompromising. A glance at the right-hand ridge of the photograph will, I am sure, convince anyone how extremely difficult the rock climbing must have been. I must also point out that the chief trouble lay between seventeen thousand feet and the top—about another two thousand feet. Now, this is a very great height at which to be confronted with severe gymnastics, and it was evident that the climbing would be of the steepest description, and prolonged for several hours.

To diverge, my hope that a very much greater height than has yet been reached may still be achieved is greatly based on performances of this kind. Mr. Mummery, Professor Collie, and Rifleman Ragobir Thapa, made a couple of climbs on that desperate rock-ridge of Nanga Parbat of the same character. Now, both these occasions called for physical exertion of the very greatest; infinitely greater than is required for walking up even steep snow-slopes in good condition, as although the latter is, at great heights, extremely tiring, it is regular work without sudden tremendous exertion. Even when step-cutting has to be done, the axe-swing can be regular and the leader changed. Men who have the necessary physique to do difficult gymnastics at twenty thousand feet can, I am sure, on suitable ground, add another six thousand feet to this.

To continue with the coolies. After crossing the first

ridge we found another broad glacier to cross, and another small ridge, followed by yet another glacier, on the side of which a very comfortable camp was found in a little basin on the moraine. The tents pitched, the struggle of the day was faced—that is to say, the two primus stoves were got out. One blew up at once to show its independence. It was a fearsome struggle of some hours, but finally one gave in and deigned to cook the soup, and only just in time, for night was approaching, and the climbers would not be kind if warm food was not ready. However, when three weary beings did arrive there was something to welcome them with. There was no doubt about the climb; all their clothes were torn—to wit, in the most important places. Having had a look at the mountain, I was quite prepared for what they had to say about it.

After leaving the camp they soon joined the ice-slope from the foot of which they had turned back two days before. Three hundred feet of this had to be cut up by lantern light, then to the real ridge up a steep and rotten couloir. The ridge turned out to be very steep, and broken up into continual little pinnacles, only one of which could they turn, the remainder had all to be climbed over, and were of the narrowest description.

The final ascent to the summit was along two knife-edges of hard snow, each from one hundred and fifty to two hundred yards long.

The descent over the same route, the only possible one, took longer than the ascent, but finally they arrived at the new camp at 6.30 p.m., having been fifteen and a half hours on the go.

The height of the Maiwa Kundinoo is, I hope, nineteen thousand five hundred feet, our new camp being seventeen thousand feet, approximately.

I can think of no climb that has been accomplished in the Himalaya to compare to this in difficulty, with the exception of Mr. Mummery's before-mentioned attempts on Nanga Parbat, and I think the greatest credit is due to the leader.

The next day was devoted to recovery, and, as there were coolies, and food arrangements to be made, I, the cripple of the party, set off in the early morning for Patseo.

We found out that the farther and higher peak that they were aiming for was called Kundini, and Kundini they were determined to add to Maiwa Kundinoo. So a sufficiency of food and coolies were left with them, and it was hoped, if the always doubtful weather held, that they would have another success.

Meanwhile preparations had to be made for a further move north, and the break-up of the party. For it was no use my wife sitting alone in such a wilderness as Patseo when she might return to the greater comfort and pleasantness of Kyelang, within reach of the kind Schnabels. Everything in this world is a matter of contrast, and though Kyelang is not complete civilization, it is so in comparison with Patseo. Consequently transport had to be collected, stores broken up and divided. The menagerie, too, not very large, but of all shapes—two ponies, a retriever, a dachshund, and a black cocker spaniel—all went back to Kyelang.

The following day the upper camp arrived, in charge of the Gurkhas, who told us that Todd and



Maiwa Kundinoo.

Führer had gone on alone, and that they had been sent back with the camp. Chandra Sing was very uncomfortable with badly inflamed eyes; he had continually taken his glasses off on Maiwa Kundinoo, and this was the result. They also said that the weather had been bad in the night, and that Todd and Führer were very late starting, and, thinking to make greater pace, had gone alone.

No doubt climbing two on a rope does allow much greater pace, and during our expedition it was repeatedly done. With adequate experience and care I do not see why it should not be safe, on most mountains, always provided that neither of the two are beginners. Many of our climbs were with only two on the rope, and some of the most difficult—Führer and Lalbahadur, and Führer and Todd.

I know all manuals on mountaineering condemn this practice, and probably it is not a wise one for general use in the Alps; at the same time many very magnificent performances have been done by two men alone—notably Mr. Mummery's many climbs in the Tyrol, where I believe it is the custom. At any rate, we never had any untoward occurrences or trouble from this practice. It is, of course, not a particularly safe course when much crevassed glacier has to be crossed.

Just as it was getting dark the two climbers were sighted, and on their arrival we were very glad to hear of their success.

During the day I had spent at the higher camp, seventeen thousand feet, I had climbed up to the top of a small ridge which gave me an excellent view of Kundini and the approach to it over the glacier.

The weather had been so rough during the night that Todd did not start till 8 a.m. The mile or so of glacier could be crossed at a great pace, and they made direct for the eastern arête in fairly clear weather. Todd described the climb as chiefly being up and over steep rock gullies and little ribs of rock jutting out from the snow-faces; the final climb to the top being up very steep slabs. Filled with enthusiasm, on their descent they traversed the mountain to a north-western arête, and descended about eight hundred feet of steep snow, thence steep slabs and a traverse more to the north landed them in an unpleasant ice couloir, rather exposed to storms, and gave them great trouble; but finally they landed on the flat glacier. A long march over three glaciers and small dividing ridges brought them to the direct line to Patseo, where they arrived by dark. The height of the peak was twenty thousand five hundred feet, approximately, and it gave them a very fine expedition, the only drawback to which was the cloudy weather, as this point undoubtedly commands a great view to the west and north over Zaskar and Chamba and Lahoul.

It had been, in fact, a most successful opening to our Patseo campaign. Two most difficult peaks had been ascended, affording every description of mountain work, and an immense extent of country had been seen. Three or four glaciers, unmarked on the map, had been crossed, and from both our high camps the barrier of mountains east of the Baralacha Pass had been carefully examined with our binoculars—the barrier between true Tibet and Lahoul, if not politically, at least geographically.

It is a most attractive ridge, holding five or six really fine points. We determined at once that our next move must be in their direction, but we were not certain whether we ought to cross the Baralacha or not. Finally, after much examination, we decided to try them first from the Lahoul side, and this turned out to be a most successful move on our part.

CHAPTER IX

THE KAKTI RIDGE

On July 28 the two camps divided, but unfortunately my wife was obliged to stay on a couple of days in Patseo, as all the transport ponies had not arrived. Also our most reliable cook, Kehar Sing, was down with a bad chill, caught from fishing up to his middle in these icy waters. Todd's Goanese servant stepped into the breach.

I admired him very much. He really was a fish out of water. Of no physique and hating cold, still he did his work like a man. Considering that his home is south of Bombay, in probably as soft and warm a climate as is to be found in Asia, and *always* soft and warm too, having virtually no cold weather, I think it wonderful how well he cooked for and looked after us. He stayed with us in our upper camp for five days, and had a taste of real rough weather into the bargain. Personally I did not think he would ever arrive, let alone be able to work, but he rolled up all right with the porters, more or less smiling.

He had his first dose of Himalayan travel on our first march from Patseo, and a full dose too. We had been warned to start early for our valley, which lay a little north of the main Tibetan road and on

the right bank of the Bhaga, as the road was rough and crossed by many glacier streams, which means, of course, that all such streams are much easier to cross in the morning, as by the afternoon a greater body of water comes down, often turning a small stream into a torrent.

Todd had not had enough the day before, although it had been a very arduous day, so he started off in the morning to try and find an ibex, a Kulu merchant, who was a bit of a sportsman on his own account, being his guide. He had quite enough before he had finished. As a matter of fact, the walk in itself was quite sufficiently fatiguing. Most Himalayan ponies are excellent over bad ground, and those we had with us were no exception. We did not get to our first really difficult stream, a swollen torrent, until about two in the afternoon, and it was a question whether we could get across. However, the climbing-ropes were brought into use, and the ponies unloaded, and everything safely landed on the far side; but even here it was a pretty hard struggle. An hour and a half of rough hillside, and we came within sight of our camp, where the valley bifurcated.

Here was a question to solve. To our front, and cutting us off from our camp, was another and much more formidable torrent, while below us was the main stream down the valley, crossed by a fine snow bridge of winter avalanche snow, but on the far side was an extremely steep and rotten bank. Both the descent and ascent were much too difficult for the ponies, and this involved many journeys.

Führer promptly crossed with two of the laden Lahoulis, and had to hack out a number of steps

in the opposite slope before they could get along. We—that is, Captain Todd, who had now joined us, and myself—did not think this good enough, and so we pushed on with the ponies to the stream, and great fun we had.

The energetic Gopoo and the Mohammedan shikarri were with difficulty passed over with the climbing-ropes, and we followed, the rope having been made fast. The poor Goanese boy got a good ducking, being swept off his feet by the rush of water, but held on manfully to the rope until he was rescued.

A narrow place was then found higher up the stream, where the water rushed between rocks down a small waterfall, too broad, however, to risk a jump. The ponies had to be unladen and sent back, as they could not have managed either place without danger not worth risking. We then made a pulley, and the loads were slung across on the stretched rope, and carried up to a safe place. When all were collected, we made a porterage to our camp, crossing the main stream by a convenient snow bridge.

The camp, which we had noted, was in a very pleasant place in deep blue grass on which a herd of half-bred yaks were grazing, the gaffer of the gang being a very handsome old man with a long black-and-white coat. They had been turned out to graze, and I suppose in a month or two would be sent for by their owners. They seemed to make nothing of crossing glacier streams, and the small yaks disappeared entirely under water in some of the deeper parts without disturbing themselves in any way. They fed about, too, on the most remarkably steep banks.

Zaskar Cone.

The sheep that we had brought with us attacked the blue grass with avidity. The camp was far enough back to be off the line of the flocks crossing the Baralacha, although the Tibetans, before their return, do their best to find places in which to fatten up their flocks again before starting on the long marches back through an almost barren country.

At this point, about fourteen thousand five hundred feet, we established a base camp. Firewood was collected, and our spare stores of food, etc., deposited. The sheep were turned out to eat their fill of the blue grass, which they enjoyed, poor old things.

Captain Todd took a day off after his continual exertions of now many days, while Führer and myself, taking the easterly branch of the valley, climbed, by means of avalanche snow and a long and stony valley, on to the glacier above. Here we turned to the west, and finally mounted a little peak directly over our camp and some three thousand feet above it, on the dividing ridge, in fact, from which we got a splendid view of the mountains that we were on our way to explore. To our north lay the glacier, which, as the valley we were in was called the Kakti, we named the Little Kakti Glacier.

We were also able to take a level to a trigonometrically measured point directly over the Baralacha road, to wit, Topachand, seventeen thousand three hundred and thirty-five feet, which appeared to be slightly below the point on which we were standing.

At the head of the small circle made by the Little Kakti Glacier was a very attractive peak, not much more than two thousand feet above the head of the

glacier, and from which it was evident we should get a fine outlook.

Directly to our east was a remarkable mass, the boldest of the bold cliff and ice scenery.

'We must have that peak too,' said Führer. 'That is a magnificent mountain. But first let us climb the little peak at the head of the glacier.'

Down we flopped to camp again, I much pleased, as my arm had not troubled me and I had done a good scramble, and now felt that at any rate, with care, I could tackle snow and ice slopes without fear as long as there was no pulling up to be done.

Steep rocks were still quite beyond me; easy rocks, with a little assistance, could be managed.

We found Todd with everything ready, and very keen to know what we had seen, so, having arranged for the Gurkhas to take our camp up during the day, and having described to them where to go—luckily quite easily done, as there were certain patches of red earth on the hillsides which could no be missed, we got everything ready for an early start.

At three o'clock we were off. A very misty morning. We were a party of four—Todd, Führer, myself, and Chandra Sing—and, following our line of the day before on to the glacier, or rather moraine, continued directly to the north, where we soon got on to the clear ice. Two hours of crevasse hopping and zigzagging brought us to the foot of our peak, or, I should say, to the foot of the main ridge of the watershed on which our peak was situated.

An hour's scramble up a steep and broken hillside landed us on top of what proved to be the edge of a great snowfield, which drained down to the Tibetan

side. Here we had a real breakfast, and were ready for it, as we had been going for five hours, and it had been very cold in the early misty morning crossing the glacier.

A snow walk of an hour and a half took us to the top of our peak without difficulty, though the last rise was steep and fatiguing, and the height considerable—namely, as far as we could make out, nineteen thousand three hundred feet.

All the heights that I give can only be approximately right, but I do not think there is any great error, and I do not really mind if there is a small one, as we had not come to establish a 'height record.' The heights were all taken with a most excellent aneroid of Todd's. Now, I know very well that no aneroid readings are to be trusted, so by way of keeping inside the mark we always knocked off four hundred feet to prevent exaggeration; besides which light-hearted step, I tested the aneroid at many already measured points up to seventeen thousand feet, and found that it almost exactly corresponded; on the only occasions on which it showed a difference it invariably erred in marking a less height than that given in the map. Under these conditions I do not think that any measurements are likely to be more than five hundred feet out, even at the highest computation.

Our descent was very rapid, and after about two and a half hours' quick going we arrived at some flattish moraine near the end of the clear glacier, an excellent centre for expeditions, near the foot of the big peak on which Führer had his eye; but a repulsive moraine in itself, every stone up on end, a wilderness of stones, and sharp ones. Führer seemed to like

it, so we sat down and finished what food we had with us, and awaited the coolies. We also named the place 'Soft Stone Camp,' and did our best to cover up and flatten some of the sharp points of the camping-ground.

The coolies arrived in the afternoon, pretty tired (as also the Goanese boy), for most of the road is over loose moraine, and there is no more fatiguing work than this, especially for heavy-laden men, and the height was considerable, about seventeen thousand five hundred feet above the sea.

But we soon had a fire going, and despatched the porters. Then our usual brew of mixed soup, consisting of a portion of meat, Emprote, and onions, to which very often we added some of Colonel Rennick's dried potato flour. A most excellent *pot-au-feu*, which supplied all one wanted, and was made just a little more appetizing by the addition of a seasoning of curry-powder.

The following morning, well before it was light, we were off to the watershed again, our object being to cross the hill snowfield we had been on before, and make a peak on the far edge, which evidently overlooked the Lingti plains, Tibet, and Zaskar.

It was light before we got on to the snowfield, and, as usual, just before the sunrise it became very cold.

The approach to our peak was across easy rising snowfields, gradually increasing in steepness until we arrived at the foot of the peak, whence a little sharp ridge of snow took us across some large, but not formidable, crevasses, landing us on a small col on the main ridge leading to the summit. Thence a very sharp rise of some eight hundred feet, and we

were on top and ready for breakfast, all very hungry.

This peak out-topped our peak of the previous day by some hundreds of feet, and we did not hesitate to place it at nineteen thousand six hundred feet approximately. The view to the north, east, and west was most interesting. We appeared to be on the edge of the mountainous snow world, for, with the exception of the Zaskar peaks to the west, the landscape seemed to be bare of snow.

Nothing could bring home to one so vividly the great dryness of the atmosphere as to observe those innumerable rolling mountains, boasting but few peaks certainly, but several of these, though over nineteen thousand feet, with hardly any snow on them at all. The glacier, even in the direction of Zaskar, from our point of view seemed to flow down from the south to the north and to be almost free of moraine. White rivers were flowing between brown hillsides, a very curious effect. We could see almost immediately below us nearly the whole of the Lingti plains, with sufficient herbage on them to give, at that distance, a tinge of green among the prevailing reddish colouring, a very uncommon but not attractive *tout ensemble*, and, except for sporting purposes, I would not care to travel in such depressing surroundings. The mountains, though considerable, are just immense rounded mounds. The valleys, however, are deceptive, as for some months they have an excellent crop of the famous blue grass, and for at least two months large flocks of sheep, chiefly belonging to the Gaddi shepherds, I am told, graze there. The grazing is of the richest description.

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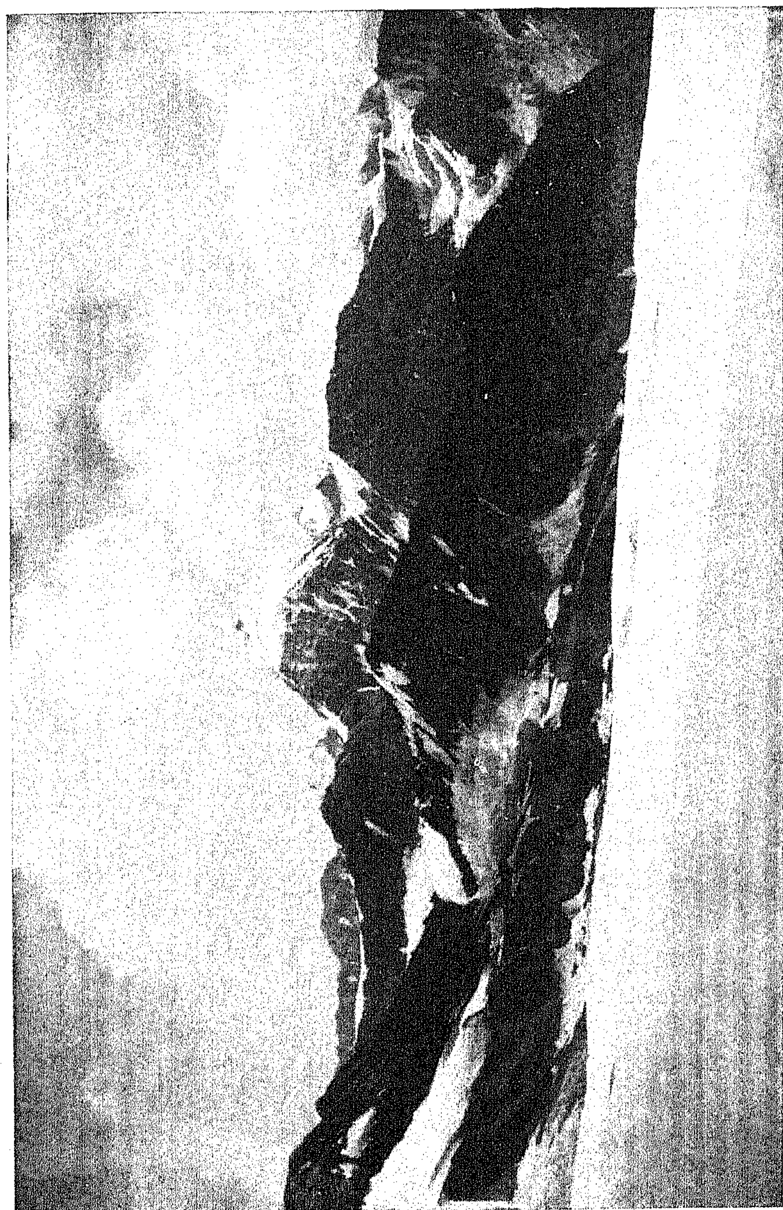
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Zaskar to the west, though bare enough in all conscience, is wild, broken, and savage to a degree; a more inhospitable country it would be hard to find; but some of the peaks are fine and boldly shaped, especially one close to the Chamba-Lahoul border, a perfect sugar-cone of considerable height, probably over twenty-two thousand feet, and most uncompromising in appearance. It would require a regular siege to tackle it.

The great difficulty in Zaskar travel by the main route via the Lingti plains to Padam, the capital, is due, I am told, to the number of streams to be negotiated. I should much like to travel there. Its intense savageness attracted me; there seemed to be nothing dull in its outlook nor tame in its desolation. They must be a hard people who live there, and able to stand great cold. They certainly suffer very much if exposed to heat, and object to going down even into quite temperate climates.

From our peak we had a most beautiful view of the great peak above our camp. Clouds were drifting about already, and we could see great masses to the south, which did not look well for us; but just enough clouds were drifting round the big peak to show him off to the best advantage. We could not wait any longer for fear the weather should break and catch us before we could reach our tents and make all snug. We were afraid of violent storms, such as we had seen very often from high places raging on the Kulu border; but though we met with a great deal of wet and cloudy weather, still we never had more than a capful of wind with it, the fact being that the storms had exhausted their violence to the south. We often



watched tremendous displays of lightning on the Kulu and Chamba borders, but cold and unpleasant as it often was, we never experienced anything really violent.

We reached our camp in plenty of time, but bad weather came on in the evening, and the following morning mist, snow, and sleet were the order of the day.

I could get no information from anyone about this out-of-the-way part, and certainly no names, so we were at a loss what to call our last mountain. No suitable name suggesting itself, we just called it 'the Unnamed Peak,' and let it go at that; just one of the great herd of unnamed peaks of twenty thousand feet in the Himalayan System.

I was obliged to go down the following day to look after supplies and coolies, wood and sheep, and so spent an active day; the others had to stay in their small tents and make the best of it.

We had by this time made a friend of a raven who came to be fed, and got comparatively tame. One day an idea seemed suddenly to strike him, as, in the middle of pecking up bits which were being thrown to him, he rapidly took himself off. In a couple of hours he was back, with his wife, so Todd said. I stuck out that it was his first cousin whom he was looking after, as his uncle and aunt had lately died; this was evident from his lugubrious air. This was the making of a pretty quarrel, which lasted until the weather cleared two days later. Then, though the weather was still doubtful, Todd and Führer set out as late as 6 a.m. to tackle our terrific neighbour, which we have now named 'Todd's Giant.'

Führer was deadly keen, and said that as the weather was so bad only Todd and himself were to go, in order to travel at the highest possible speed. The first two thousand feet on to the main ridge was the real difficulty. Führer had made many examinations of it—a most awkward piece of mountaineering—the rock climbing of a very high order, and rendered harder by the snow and sleet of the last two days. In fact, they had to abandon the route that Führer had marked out, and dig out another for themselves, back and fore of the main ridge south of our camp. This was accomplished by the help of many traverses on to the face and much hard work before they finally emerged on to a steep but good snow-slope which led to the main ridge. From this point it was expected that there would be a straight run of about one thousand five hundred feet to the summit; but, to their great chagrin, as they had had all the gymnastics they required, they found another difficult pitch of about three hundred feet to be tackled; thence to the top a long, easy, although steep slope, up which they toiled, and then they reached the top.

Afterwards, in relating their experiences, they both said they could not make out why they were so done up over this last pull. I could only answer that, considering the pace they had climbed the first face, I could not imagine how they had got up at all.

The height of the peak must be close on twenty thousand feet, and may be more. It is only marked as a 'Snowy Peak.' The weather was very cold and rough, and Führer was anxious, as if it had turned out really bad they could hardly have ventured down the way they had come up, but would have had to

attempt to climb directly down to the Bhaga River — over seven thousand feet below them — besides which it is no joke being caught on an exposed ridge at a height of twenty thousand feet and more.

Although Todd's Giant is marked on the map as Snowy Peak and no more, it is easily seen in the map attached to this book.

The map of this region is very puzzling, and especially across the watershed. We took it up on our previous peaks, but could not make it fit in at all. Not that I blame the Survey; it is an out-of-the-way and unimportant part of many thousand sections of the same kind. The wonder is, considering the immense extent of country surveyed, how few mistakes in the upper world there are; the lower world is absolutely to be relied upon.

While Todd was tackling his giant, I and the Gurkhas went for a scramble on our own account.

The Little Kakti Glacier, on which we were encamped, is divided from the main Kakti basin and glacier by a dividing ridge running south from our little Kakti peak. From the top of this peak we had a good view of the beautiful Kakti Glacier, and of a fine peak at its head; rather isolated, beautiful in itself, and from which an undoubtedly remarkable panorama to the west would be obtainable. So we set out to examine the way over the dividing ridge, and to amuse ourselves by climbing a little peak on the ridge itself, which perhaps attained a height of eighteen thousand five hundred feet.

We had a very pleasant scramble and a good view of our way, or rather of most of it, for the way turned out afterwards to hold traps. I was also able, with

the help of the men, to do a little rock scrambling, and was much cheered at this sign of returning strength in my most important arm.

We had been back but a short time when Todd and Führer returned, much pleased, but both with bad headaches, and both done up. And indeed they must have been in magnificent condition and actually 'on their day' to have accomplished the peak in such rough weather and so very rapidly; it was, no doubt, the only thing to be done on this occasion, but travelling so fast at a great height is a very hard strain, and requires the greatest stamina.

A day of rest followed, taken up with attentions to 'Bilbahadur,' the raven, and his cousin. I was certain it was his cousin, as he had again departed and brought two more back with him; besides, they all seemed to be the same age. Bilbahadur, the first friend, introduced the others, but could never get them to come as close as he did himself, so he generally got the best bits, the reward of virtue and unselfishness. He was a very pleasant fowl, and we were sorry to part with him.

We were all the better for our rest, and started for our big peak at 3 a.m. on August 7. On this occasion we took everybody—two rope loads—as we had agreed that it must be our final climb. Also that this night should be the last at Soft Stone camp, and, indeed, I think we had had quite enough of it. Pretty frequent bad weather, drifting and driving snow and sleet and mist, mixed with occasional sunny days, had been our lot; and the very hardest sleeping that I have ever experienced, I think. Other moraines were child's play to the horrid stones of 'Soft Stone.' Everything

was up on end, and the tents always full of drift snow and snow brought in by boots; damping wet and very cold mists were also rather a trial. This was ou tenth day at the high camp, and I think we had fairly earned a few nights at the more comfortable elevation of fourteen thousand five hundred feet at the base camp. As a matter of fact, the only discomfort that we suffered from on the score of elevation was, that if during sleep one's head slipped down off the pillow one was apt to wake up with a headache; this, however, went off in a few minutes when the head was again propped up. No one had any sensation of difficulty in breathing, though any sudden exertion caused a pant or two.

To continue our climb. We crossed the Little Kakti by candle-light; a few zigzags through crevasses, and a very comfortable walk up to the little col over the dividing ridge; then rough snow-banks and moraine, and a slight rise to what we had imagined to be a fairly flat way to the main Kakti Glacier. But suddenly, to our disgust, we came to an extremely steep descent of at least five hundred feet into a valley at the foot of the glacier itself.

It really required considerable scrambling to get down. It was not the getting down that upset us, but the fact that right in front of us lay our big peak, with many hours of work, and we were all imagining the remarks we should make on our return when we were again confronted with this five hundred feet of rotten rocks, loose stones, and loose scree. It was especially unpleasant at the moment, as we had but just descended another five hundred feet from the dividing col.

It was, for once, a gorgeous morning, the finest and purest of air. A lucky snow-bank skirted the much crevassed glacier, and we made fine progress on perfect snow, traversing as fast as we could go with an upward slant to a little col which we had heard was sometimes crossed by Zaskar men on their way to Patseo. We passed under a magnificent ice-fall of the very whitest ice, and, leaving the little col, we could from here see the way down to the junction base camp, a way which offered no difficulties, with the exception of a certain amount of ice which had to be crossed; and no doubt, if the northern side was easy, would make a very good pass for men on foot. One never knows, however, where these men will take their ponies, and Zaskar ponies are wonderful on the hillside. On arrival at our col we sat down comfortably to breakfast, and had a good look at the nearest slopes. There was very much less snow than on the southern side. We had a fine view over many Zaskar valleys, and saw also the whole way down from the col itself, some eighteen thousand feet, and there was nothing to stop any hillman from crossing; besides, eighteen thousand feet is quite ordinary in these parts.

The northern side was true Zaskar. Many quite respectable glaciers in view, and also quite clean—gleaming white, in fact—between brown banks. They seemed to push down a remarkable way from their nearest feeders, snowfields; partly, I suppose, from the steepness of their upper ends. The general snowfall in Zaskar must be very much lighter than in Lahoul, as was apparent from the condition of the mountains directly in front of us to the north and about the same height as ourselves.



Cornice on Kakti Peak.



Soft Stone Camp.

The contrast was very great, for we were on a mass of glacier extending right away to Maiwa Kundinoo, though divided up by many little ridges, insignificant in extent compared to the immense area under snow and ice. We were in a snow world, in fact, and, moreover, we were on the very edge of it, for, to our right hand, with the exception of the tremendous ice-slopes, it seemed abruptly to end, only the highest points showing snow or ice in any quantity.

After an acceptable but moderate breakfast, we faced the snow-slope which led directly to the summit. Chiefly a steep trudge of hard snow, rapidly increasing in steepness until near the top, when some waves in the ridge caused the formation of a small schrund about twenty-five minutes from the summit. A really beautiful ridge, steep on both sides, but not too sensational in its steepness, and much overhung in places by a cornice magnificently furnished with immense icicles of pure ice.

A knife-edge—some fifty feet long, narrow, and rather sensational—landed us on the little rocky summit, on which we found an ample and really very well arranged resting-ground.

The weather had relented at last, and the view was beyond anything, magnificent—just enough cloud about to give a little atmosphere, but not so as to interfere with what was beyond comparison the finest great panorama of the whole trip.

Führer, by this time accustomed to Himalayan landscapes, was moved to wonder by the prodigious distances we could see, and by the masses of mountains in every direction.

Our height, over twenty thousand feet, on a peak of

the main chain, an isolated position, was perfectly situated.

Todd and Führer were also delighted at the splendid view they had of their peaks, their two first climbs, and the giant to the east, which stood up very boldly, so that they could trace almost every step of their way up.

But the sugar-loaf immediately to our west, which I have before mentioned and cannot identify, was the gem of this gorgeous panorama.

The whole of Zaskar, savage and gloomy, was before us to the north, and directly south the great main massif of the Lahoul groups surrounded by the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers, like two arms. We could make it all out. The three Gaphans were clear then, but, before we left, had been enveloped by the cloud masses advancing over the Kulu border. We were also much pleased with the appearance of the Patseo Valley, up which we next proposed to go, and which we had rather dreaded, as its approach from the mouth of the valley is dreary in the extreme. We did not find out its real worth till later on. I was especially interested, as I thought, and still think, that I could make out my old friend Nun Kun to the west-north-west. I tried hard to locate the great peaks of the Karakoram and Nubra, but if the misty outlines that I saw with my glasses were they, it was too far for me to identify them. No; magnificent as the view was, it contained, neither north, south, east, nor west, any of the real giants. But it was a grand opportunity for photography, an opportunity which was not wasted. The portrait of the Zaskar Peak was taken from this point.

One cannot stay on the top of a peak for ever, so the time had come to photograph the party on the extreme top, which done, we turned to our homeward route, choosing this time the direct descent to the Great Kakti Glacier, down some steep but easy snow-slopes. A few steep pitches on the glacier through softish snow, and over some rather large crevasses—luckily well bridged—brought us on to the main flat glacier, which proved to be much crevassed, and covered with the best part of a foot of fresh snow.

The heat and glare here were really very great, but knowing that we had not far to go, we set to work to get off the ice as soon as possible. Apart from the heat, we really had a very interesting bit of work, with a final long and rather sensational slither off the ice on to moraine and coolness again.

It needs but little to turn a smiling but tired party into a lot of grumps. That infernal five hundred feet of loose rocks did it with ease. It was a real fag, and we only recovered our good-humour again when we all collected on the little dividing col, from whence we could see our camp and the fire, which expressed hot tea and Emprote soup. We had not quite reached it, however, as we took a route too near to the summit of the glacier, and in consequence got rather involved in bits of steep ice and among the séracs, giving ourselves an hour's extra work, but this was a mere nothing compared to that loose scramble up from the glacier; it produced no temper, and was hardly even regarded with mild regrets.

On arrival in camp, we felt quite pleased with ourselves, and thoroughly satisfied with our ten days on the Kakti. I doubt whether we could have done

more than we did even if the weather had been continuously fine. Rest must be taken, and however fit and strong one may be, continuous hard work at high altitudes will leave its mark.

Early on August 8, in broken weather again, we descended to our main camp, and so on to Patseo in two stages, for we had not enough coolies to move the whole camp at once. So we pushed on with what was necessary, making arrangements for the remainder to be forwarded. As we were marching early, the streams proved tractable, and we arrived comfortably in the afternoon at Patseo Bangalow and found a few extra comforts we had left behind there.

A good many of the traders had by this time departed, including the big camp of the Tibetan merchant, but there were still a few tents and many great stacks of wool, and our Darjeeling friend was still to the fore. We were told that as soon as all the traders have left, both from north and south, the ibex come down on to the Patseo Plain and lick the earth for salt. It is very likely true, as for many months Patseo is absolutely without a soul, and there is enough salt dropped about for any number of ibex to nourish themselves with. As a matter of fact, there are always ibex on the mountains close to Patseo, though a head of even forty inches is rare.

We had one more expedition to make before our climbing tour finished and Todd returned to his regiment and Führer went back to Switzerland.

At the head of the Patseo Valley were the two peaks which we had seen from our high camp below Maiwa Kundinoo, and which evidently were so situated that from them we expected not only to be able to examine

the whole of the main Lahoul massif, but to get a view of the Chandra River also.

On August 10 we were off once more, having collected sufficient supplies by that time to last us for our short expedition; for stores were now getting short, nor was there any means of replenishing nearer than Kyelang.

We did not start until the afternoon, and a hot and lazy march over country very broken and dreary, and in places very steep, brought us to a quite comfortable camp, with enough scrub round it to afford us an ample supply of very indifferent firewood. Apparently half a stack of this stuff lasted about ten minutes. Todd had gone off by himself in the morning to look for an ibex, and arrived in camp not very long after us—unsuccessful as usual.

The next day, August 11, he and Führer started off for the nearer and lower of our two peaks. I elected to remain in camp, as for once I was not very fit, and besides, some of our stores having failed us, I was obliged to send down a couple of Gurkhas to see what they could find, and annex a sheep into the bargain, the promised animal not having arrived the evening of the previous day. The climbers arrived in the evening, having had a successful climb of a very rough sort, but bringing glowing accounts of the upper valley.

They said that within three miles of our camp the whole character of the valley and also that of the mountains changed; and that they had been among some of the finest ice scenery that we had yet seen. This was excellent news, and gave me heart, as the outlook from our camp was not exactly exciting; in

fact, the surroundings were downright ugly, though bold enough.

The climb itself which they had accomplished must have been satisfactory from the point of view of outlook, but a real fag. It chiefly consisted in mounting immense boulders, twenty feet high and more, up a never-ending ridge and face—a kind of gigantic scree-slope, the rocks being of such a size as to give plenty of gymnastics, but boulders all the same, one on top of the other.

The height reached was about nineteen thousand five hundred feet. They also said that the higher peak beyond, which had shut out their view, was the peak to make for, and the going would also probably be much pleasanter.

The weather then broke, and the following day was rough, but it cleared in the evening. So on the next day we took a small camp up to a delightful camping-ground which they had found within comfortable reach of the farther peak.

We had a most interesting walk up to it; I certainly was astonished at the scenery we came into. After a pleasant scrambly walk we emerged on to open downs, the bare hills left behind, and the mountains to the south magnificently shaped and magnificently draped in snow and ice. Our little camp was on a small green peninsula, situated at the foot of a mass of old moraine—a meadow carpeted thickly with the finest edelweiss that we had found in Lahoul, both as to size and variety.

The great glaciers from the unnamed mountains to the south filled up the whole head of the valley, and came down to within a hundred yards of our camp.

A beautiful camp in a beautiful situation, with the softest of turf to sleep on.

This upper camp is evidently used as a grazing ground for a month or two in the year, to judge from the numerous marks of sheep and goats, but the middle of August is already late, and they had moved down.

This was to be our last climb, so we started alone next morning—Todd, Führer, and myself—at about 3 a.m. We had a very rough scramble to reach the foot of the glacier at the foot of our peak, but finally reached it and climbed on to its flat surface, arriving on the level ice just when there was sufficient daylight for us to do away with our candles. Thence to the ridge we had marked out as our line. We had a steep and rough climb over continual big stones, until shortly after six o'clock we emerged on to the ridge and had a much wanted breakfast.

It had been very cold in the early morning, and Todd had got one of his hands touched by the frost; we all, too, had cold feet, so some little time was expended in putting things to rights. Then the ridge again; something like what Todd and Führer had experienced on the first peak, but not so trying, so they said. Luckily the boulders soon changed to solid rock, which afforded a very interesting bit of rock work, just within the powers of a man with only one and a half arms.

A final easy snow-slope landed us on the top at almost 9 a.m. As we had expected, there was a fine outlook. To the east we could see the head of the Chandra River and the river itself, and to the west the Bhaga. We stood twenty thousand feet up,

facing the whole Lahoul massif to the south, but alas! now all enveloped in masses of drifting cloud, so that only now and then could we catch glimpses of summits. But the glacier which formed the upper basin of our valley was very interesting; its highest point was a large basin, half draining into the Chandra, and half into the Bhaga, the glacier on each side rising in gentle slopes so as to form a hardly distinguishable watershed. We were, so to speak, standing on top of the corner-stone of the whole of the mountains of Central Lahoul, and it was a great disappointment that the weather did not treat us better.

We found an easy couloir leading directly on to the glacier, and descended very rapidly by it. On the way down the clouds lifted a little for a moment or two, and I was thus enabled to get a couple of snapshots at the head of the great glacier.

The ice scenery was of the finest, and although we had had a view of a good deal of it the previous evening, we had not been able to see the much finer surroundings in which we now were, and of which the weather just allowed us tantalizing peeps.

It was a longish, rough, and hard grind to get back to our camp among the edelweiss by twelve o'clock. But when we arrived we found the Gurkhas all ready with a brew of tea, which speedily revived us, and feeling very bold and pleased with ourselves, w determined to try and get back to Patseo by night—a long tramp.

The porters had arrived from Scrub Camp, and the loads were light, so, travelling very fast, we soon got down to Kehar Sing's cooking-pots and grilled mutton steaks. When we had thus fortified ourselves, we



Summit of Kakti Peak.



Self and Führer on Kakti Ridge.

[illegible]

soon struck, packed, and despatched the camp, and made Patseo by 6.30 p.m. Very good going at the end of a long day, and a fine finish to our season. We were ready to take it easy till our transport arrived, with the exception of the indefatigable Todd, who went off next morning with Chandra Sing up a neighbouring nullah for ibex, this time actually seeing two heads, and quite a considerable number of beasts, and last, but not least, two gigantic males with heads quite twelve inches in length.

All being collected, we began our return journey on August 17. No time was to be lost, as Führer had to catch his steamer in Bombay by September 1, which meant good travelling, if he was to be in time; and Todd's leave was up on the same date.

We had a fine catch of fish again at Jispa, and on our arrival at Kyelang Bangalow were met by my wife with an epicurean lunch—salad, fruit, and all kinds of luxuries.

Final photographs of the complete party were taken here, and last, but of most importance, the 'Batcha' was restored to his anxious master.

Thus ended a most successful climbing season, and one which ought to be most gratifying to Führer, who, under many difficulties of language and strange surroundings, had covered himself with professional glory, having succeeded in a large number of climbs, many of them of great difficulty, and shown himself a thorough enthusiast.

I have only one fault to find, and that is that he does not like fish; or maybe I am wrong, and the fish does like him.

CHAPTER X

KYELANG

KYELANG was our Capua, and seemed almost complete luxury after the glaciers of Upper Lahoul. Even the enthusiastic Führer allowed that he had had enough, and looked forward to comforts.

I found my wife established in a delightful little two-roomed cottage one thousand one hundred feet above Kyelang main street. It really was a charming little abode, and formed a kind of dower-house to the Moravian missionary headquarters in Kyelang town.

It was situated in the centre of fields, the farm-lands owned by the Mission. Just below the cottage was the principal farm-house, tenanted by Christian Lahoulis. The farmer's wife was Ladakhi by birth, and both she and her husband were very nice people.

The little house, Tingtse Cottage, was admirably situated, commanding the whole extent of the view up and down the Bhaga River; a really remarkable situation, and a perfect climate, for its height was considerably over eleven thousand feet, and the air extremely fresh and invigorating. My wife had already spent over a fortnight there, and had enjoyed it very much. She and the dogs had explored the hillsides all round, and had descended many times to tea with our friends the Schnabels.

It was just the place to take a rest in before starting off again on the less ambitious travels through the Kulu valleys which we contemplated. We were also very anxious to see as much as we could of Kyelang and its surroundings; quite worth, to my mind, a much longer stay than we were able to make. In fact, for an unambitious holiday, a journey to Kyelang, and three or four weeks passed in its neighbourhood, would be time very well spent, especially for a bracing after a hot weather in India. I know of no finer climate in the whole Himalaya.

On both banks of the River Bhaga are numerous villages, Kyelang itself being only the chief village and headquarters of the local government, so to say. Its neighbourhood is the centre of Lahoul, and also the nucleus of the population. On both sides of the river a considerable area of flat to flattish ground is under cultivation. As I have before mentioned, when water can be conveyed or laid on, an excellent return is yielded; magnificent crops also of grass, the hay from which made the sweetest and best fodder that I have ever seen in India. It is a mixed crop of grasses, clover, and lucerne, and the scent of the hay reminded one of the richest English hay. Our ponies did wonderfully on it, and got no grain at all during the whole of their stay in Lahoul. In fact, the lack of hard work and the rich grazing made them as round as tubs before we left the valley.

This was the first time we had the opportunity to see much of the people, but we did what we could in that direction during our all-too-short stay. We certainly liked them very much, and found them nice to deal with.

Kyelang, too, was always interesting, as every day different types of Tibetans and neighbouring hill people were passing through it, and very quaint some of them were—the wildest creatures imaginable; men of Rudok, Rupshu, Zaskar, Spiti; men from the east, and Lahore traders, and, mixed up with them, strange and weird creatures who, most of them, regarded a visit to Kulu in the summer months much as we should regard a trip to the Sahara. There were also Panjabi mule-drivers and banniahs from the Panjab bazaars, most inadequately dressed and unsuitably provided for a journey over the Baralacha to Leh, whither most of them were bound. In the event of bad weather I cannot imagine how they would put up with it, or even survive. Still, the average Indian banniah would always run a risk of this kind rather than spend a few extra rupees on his clothes.

The district of Lahoul has for long been ruled by the Thakur (Rajput) families of Kyelang and of Gundla, and their relations; and since it has been under British rule they govern the country, holding more or less the position which Tehsildars hold under the ordinary regulations of the Panjab districts.

The present Thakur of Lahoul has, I believe, rather larger powers than a Tehsildar, and of course has a much more important position in his own country, as he is besides hereditary chief of at least a great part of the country.

I noticed, too, round Kyelang many traces of mixed Rajput blood amongst the people. The true Lahouli has an out-and-out Tibetan face, so that a mixture of high-born Indian blood, with its clearly-cut

features and well-shaped nose, in particular, is very easily distinguished. At first sight all Lahoulis appear to be of exactly the same extraction; but this is by no means true, and there would seem to be survivals of several races of Tibetan extraction in this small district. For though Tibetan is the *lingua franca* of the country, there are besides three quite separate dialects still ordinarily spoken, which are seldom understood by any other than the people belonging to the district where that particular dialect is in use, so different are they.

Besides these three main dialects there is another survival, spoken only in Koksar and the village next to it, where possibly there may be two hundred people living, and that is a liberal estimate. It is the very tail-end of a very ancient language, or possibly the remains of some very ancient form of Tibetan; and, curiously enough, the only language to which it is in any way related is, I am told, the Mundari dialect spoken by a small tribe south of Calcutta. Both these dialects have the same traces of archaic forms of Tibetan. It has nothing in common with the other dialects, even less than they have with each other.

Apart from these two Koksar villages, Lahoul is divided up into three divisions: First, the Gundla villages, presided over by the Thakur of Gundla or another family from the Kyelang Thakurs, where the people speak 'Tinan'; secondly, the Manchat, which comprises all the Lahoul country, from the junction of the Chandra-Bhaga down to beyond the Chamba-Lahoul boundary, and includes the Bhotias of Chamba-Lahoul, which is that part of geographical Lahoul belonging to the Chamba State. The dialect

spoken is called 'Manchat.' The third division is the centre of the country, Kyelang, and its surrounding villages, all on the banks of the Bhaga River, where the dialect spoken is called 'Boonan.'

All these different districts communicate with each other in Tibetan, which the people all learn from their childhood. Also, as so many of the Lahoulis trade to the Kulu Valley, and even down into Kangra and beyond, a number of them speak Hindustani and Panjabi of a sort. They are, at any rate, from whichever part of the country they come, completely bi-lingual.

Lahoul is full of monasteries and Lamas, but the Buddhism is, I imagine, of an easy-going description. I believe that nearly all the Lamas of Lahoul belong to the 'Pokpa' sect, the 'Red Hats,' who are reputed to be not nearly as strict as the 'Gelugpa,' or 'Yellow Hats,' to which sect the Lamas of neighbouring Spiti belong. In fact, most of the Lamas in Lahoul are married; not that this prevents there being nunneries as well as monasteries. One sees the nuns working all over the fields, and the difficulty is to tell them from boys, as there is very little difference in dress and the nuns cut their hair short. They are the most pleasant and cheery creatures, and seem quite pleased with their life. At least half the year is spent outside the monastery, either at home or working in their fields, both their own and the monastic ones.

I wandered about a good deal among the villages, chiefly after the blue-rock pigeons, a familiar place for which was the bridge over the Bhaga leading to the left bank and the large stretch of cultivation round the Kardang village on the same side.

Kardang is a fine village, very well situated and well built. Here also lived the sister of the Mohammedan Gopoo and her various husbands. Gopoo is a most tolerant follower of Islam; born a Buddhist, of mixed Ladakhi and Gurkha parentage, a converted Mohammedan, and living continually with the most superstitious of debased Hindus, he takes everything just as it comes, and appeared to me only to differ from his surroundings in that he did not drink loogri and the light Lahouli spirit. He was ready at all times to bow down in the house of Rimmon.

Gopoo's chief brother-in-law was an exceptionally nice Lahouli, who had travelled much, a considerable trader, as were also his brothers. At the time we were in Kyelang the other brothers were away, but he invited us into his house and showed us all over it. It was very large, and had several rooms, to say nothing of being four stories high. The upper story, to which I was taken, was a sort of roof-room or courtyard with other rough buildings outside. We were entertained in a spotlessly clean room, containing very little furniture beside mats, on which we all sat, including the Gurkhas. I was offered my choice of Tibetan or Indian tea. Now, Tibetan tea is more than I can face. It is churned up in a special utensil with ghee and other savouries, and comes out a thick and smelly soup rather than tea. The Indian tea which he produced was most excellent, and must have been the best kind of Kangra produce; it was very well made, and was served to me in a Chinese bowl. The bowl was then presented to me, and is quite worth having, of good china and colouring, the green and yellow dragon design typically Tibetan.

When the sister came to drink a dish of tea with Gopoo up at Tingtse Cottage she brought her own cup, a red china bowl, with its metal stand and cover, and presented it to my wife, who had admired it.

Before we left their house the brother-in-law showed us with great pride his private chapel. The whole of one side of the room was closed with wooden panels which our host slid aside, and so revealed a very complete little Buddhist shrine. He also appeared to be the owner of a considerable Buddhist library and to be a scholar in his own way. I expect the profits of his trade were extracted by the Lamas, by which no doubt he acquired great merit.

Kyelang has its fair share of monasteries, and probably the finest was close to our little house up on the hill. For some time after we got there the monastery was empty, with the exception of one Lama who acted as caretaker. A most friendly and intelligent little man, but we did receive rather a shock when he asked if he might photograph us, and then produced an up-to-date Kodak of quite an expensive pattern. Really, Buddhist monks and Kodaks and photographic chemicals do not go together at all!

However, I now own two photographs taken by him which are quite successful, though I fancy Mr. Schnabel had something to do with the final stages of their production.

This Lama was in charge of the Tashi Chukling or Sheshu Monastery, which was on our hillside, and not more than three hundred yards from our cottage, and divided from it by fields of peas and some little rough ground and juniper-trees. The monastery is

KHARDANG VILLAGE.



DEVIL DANCE.

quite an imposing building, whitewashed as usual, and flat-roofed, and some three stories high. The situation is perfect, commanding the finest of all the views of the Bhaga Valley, and especially of the tremendous savage peaks south of the junction, the great Ghoosa Peak and its neighbours.

All the Lamas were away in the Manchat attending the annual fête of Triloknath, one of the chief feasts and meetings of the year, and a great place of pilgrimage, to which, I believe, large numbers of Hindus also go, the place being a sacred one to followers of both religions. As usual, the pilgrimages and sacred fêtes, so to speak, are not such serious undertakings as the Hindu pilgrimages to such places as Hurdwar, or to Badrinath in the Garhwal Himalayas. A fête in these parts is a fête in fact. Everyone goes on the spree, and gets back as well as he can.

When the Lamas finally did turn up at Kyelang they were a friendly crew, headed by respectable-looking old gentlemen with the most benevolent faces and manners. They celebrated what was apparently a kind of return service the day after their arrival, which we witnessed. We were taken up to a little side chapel on the upper roof above the main shrine after we had been shown over the monastery, and were introduced to the chief Lama.

Shortly after the service began, with much tinkling of bells and sounding of gongs, the rest of the Lamas being called together by a sort of 'Fall in' on a big conch shell.

They all sat on mats facing the shrine, and the loose pages of the selected psalms were passed round by the choirmaster, a young and particularly cheerful

Lama with black curly hair, very strong and well built, who besides gave the note and started the chanting, which was very sing-song and rather Gregorian in character, and with continual weird changes. The black-haired leader was never at fault, and must have had a prodigious memory, as he never seemed to refer to his different slips, and was always ready to correct the old fellows and to prompt them, for they appeared to get lost now and then. The young man had quite a musical voice into the bargain.

We left, after paying a visit to the innumerable prayer-wheels and giving them a twist, thereby laying up a fine store of merit for ourselves, as several hundred thousand times the prayer 'Om mani padmeh hon!' must have been wafted up on our account. 'O God, the jewel in the lotus!' is, I believe, the meaning of it, and it carries comfort to many millions of Buddhists; quite as much, probably, as the word 'Mesopotamia' conveyed to the old lady who took comfort therein.

Before leaving, the chief Lama promised us a devil dance of the best if we would appoint a day.

We had, however, arranged for an exploration of the valley west of Kyelang, and desired also, if possible, to get on top of the peak Machu, directly up behind our abode, on whose slopes we lived. In fact, if one likes, one can ascend direct from Kyelang itself to the top of Machu—a good feat, however.

On a preliminary reconnaissance I got to a point at about fifteen thousand five hundred feet, which gave me an excellent view of Machu and of the great valley to the west, and, in consequence, not being

attracted to this valley, which was dull and stony to a degree, I arranged to try the peak, evidently of no particular difficulty, all quite straight sailing.

Had I been able to do so, I should have had a perfect outlook over a large tract of country to the west which I had not seen; but it was not to be, for bad weather came on which lasted three days without stopping, and quite put an end to any high expectation in the time which we had at our disposal.

Meanwhile the devil dance had been arranged for. Devil dances have been described innumerable times, but although I had often read of them, I was quite unprepared for the elaborateness of the dresses and masks, or for the great number of separate figures which were part of the programme, each figure having its appropriate dress.

The dances are, of course, representations of mythological stories. It was most interesting and entertaining, and some of the acting quite good—comic to a degree a great deal of it.

The head Lamas sat solemnly on their special dais, and were full of dignity in their robes and head-dresses. They had marched in solemnly at the head of a procession, and had taken their places on the dais. What was our astonishment, therefore, when the programme (which occupied over two hours) came to an end, to see them solemnly dance out of the arena and up the steps to the monastery as a grand finale, executing the most remarkable and comic capers I have ever seen, all with absolute gravity. Naturally we had to preserve the same grave demeanour throughout the performance, but our party

—my wife, self, and especially the Gurkhas—very nearly blew up with the effort.

Fortunately an excuse for legitimate laughter, in which all joined, was the saving of us, and we took a most friendly farewell of our Lama hosts, as they were again leaving the monastery for a spell on account of harvest-time, and every available person—man, woman, and child—was required to cut corn and grass, and, what is more, carry it home themselves. The Lamas have to work just as hard as anyone else at this season. Some of the old fellows looked too well-liking all the same to be in the habit of taking much severe exercise or exertion.

Harvest-homes and hay-making all the world over are times of jollification, and they could join in those exercises without undue strain.

Below Kyelang, and above the village of Billing, is a small monastery situated on very much the same kind of ground as the one at Koksar—that is to say, it is built on a ledge in the face of a cliff; but this one is several hundred feet up on the mountain-side. We went up to it armed with cameras, but could not get a good photograph, unfortunately. It is a climb to get there at all, and very curious. The monks were all away harvesting.

Our Lama photographer friend was evidently neither a harvester nor yet a roysterer, and during this time he used to come and visit us every now and then. On one occasion he arrived simultaneously with the illustrated *Times of India*, on the first page of which there happened to be a picture of the Dalai Lama himself, the Gewa Rimpoché, to give him his Tibetan title. The intelligent little man seemed to

know plenty about him, as also about the Tashi Lama, whom the Tibetans call the Panchin Rimpoché, and of his journey to India some years ago. This Lama had an ascetic and refined face, and I rather expect there was some Thakur blood in his veins. At any rate he was superior, besides being a very pleasant little man, and I hope to renew the acquaintance before very long if my luck will allow me to revisit Lahoul.

Just about now was the anxious time for Mr. Schnabel too, for the Moravian Mission have acquired a considerable amount of land, which he and his converts farm. The real difficulties arise when harvest-time comes round, as there is a great demand for labour, and Kyelang does not produce much. Also the cold weather very quickly arrives, necessitating the rapid garnering of the crops, and grass must be cut for hay, and stored as quickly as possible to avoid loss.

The Mission has a large farming business, as besides growing all his own grain, potatoes, etc., Mr. Schnabel has large flocks of sheep. As far as it is possible to influence such superstitious folk as the Lahoulis, he has improved their methods of agriculture, and to a certain extent made them rely more on common sense than on auspicious omens and favourable days, for beginning either to sow or reap. He and his wife, in fact, live a most practical life among the people, and one of the happiest signs is to see how well his people turn out. Especially there is no attempt made to take them out of their surroundings, or to give them modern English Christian names or clothes when they are baptized.

The farm was conducted very much as a small European farm might be, and the bailiff and his wife ran everything in much the same way—far better really—and helped to keep the farm accounts.

This Mission is of very long standing. I believe it was established over sixty years ago, or immediately after Lahoul territory came under the British Government. I do not think it has a very large number of professed converts—about thirty or forty actual Christians in Kyelang, I believe—but these numbers do not represent the enormous amount of good Mr. and Mrs. Schnabel have done in a great many really practical ways. For instance, Mrs. Schnabel has taught a great number of Lahouli women and girls to make excellent socks and stockings, jerseys and comforters. In fact, a new industry has been established. The knitting is chiefly done during the winter, when there is so little for the people to do and the country is for the greater part of the time under snow. During these months, also, schools are in full swing, both Mr. and Mrs. Schnabel teaching. Besides these many activities, Mr. Schnabel is the only person with any medical knowledge in the whole of Lahoul, and is being continually applied to in every kind of illness or accident, for all of which he does his best.

Some of the problems he has to tackle are rather startling. While we were at Kyelang some half a dozen men in the Manchat, who were laying a wooden pipe to carry water across the face of a cliff, owing either to stones coming from above or from the face giving way, were precipitated down the cliff, and all more or less broken up. Mr. Schnabel flew off to



Bhaga River and Bridge.

attend them although the place where the accident had happened was over twenty miles away. This is only one of many proofs of the confidence the people have in him, and that, irrespective of the actual making of converts the civilizing influence of the Mission must be great. Even the mere example of doing so much for people without asking anything in return is in itself worth untold gold.

I made considerable purchases of thick socks and stockings. Very thick and warm they are too, and just the thing for hill-work in cold weather.

I had designs before leaving of ascending the high rocky peak on the left bank of the Bhaga which dominates the whole valley. It has the euphonous name of Lambuchoks, and is reached via the Rang-ka-la, or Tilbu-ri, as it is ordinarily called. But bad weather continued, and when the time came for us to leave I had to be content with climbing up to the Tilbu-ri, which was the pass that Todd and I had crossed in the night on our way into Kyelang.

Before we left, too, we saw the annual August harvest festival, which makes the complete tour of the Tilbu-ri, from Kyelang, over the Pass, and down to Gundla, where they have a first-class jamboree, and back by the main road to Kyelang and its neighbouring villages.

I think, but I am not sure—and one cannot be quite sure in such cases—that a demon lives on the Tilbu-ri who has to be propitiated. The Tilbu-ri means, being interpreted, the 'mountain of the bell,' the Tilbu being the sacred bell used by the Lamas in their worship.

For this solemn tour of the mountain the women

don their very best, all their silver ornaments and turquoises.

Some of the younger ones are quite nice-looking, with ruddy cheeks, but amongst them are many prodigious specimens of an extreme, but at the same time non-repulsive, ugliness. This terrific Tibetan hideousness, which is always lighted by the most cheerful of smiles, is seldom repulsive. Half the degree of real ugliness in another type of face would give one nightmare for a week.

We were sad when the time actually came for leaving our little cottage and our many Kyelang friends, and it was especially sad to realize that in a very few weeks the kind Schnabels would be cut off from India, and would, in all probability, not see another European face for eight months to come; and, what is worse, would have no post for quite five of those months. This isolation they endure year after year—a terrible trial and strain, involving, as it does, the impossibility of getting any news of their children in Europe. Mr. and Mrs. Heyde, their predecessors, lived, I believe, for fifty years in Kyelang, an extraordinary record. They were both, as also is Mr. Schnabel, notable Tibetan scholars.

However, our time was up, and the transport appeared, and the caravan started on its homeward march. A move in the direction of home only, it should be said, as two months' leave remained, in which life was to become strenuous once more, and we intended to explore the many Kulu valleys which we had not yet seen; I also wished to finish up a little work on the way back to Koksar before again crossing the Rahtang Pass.

My first business was to recross the Tilbu-ri, and try and get some really good photographs of the Gundla Peak.

Our day of departure broke radiantly, and after being speeded with breakfast and good wishes by Mr. and Mrs. Schnabel, I saw my wife start off with the camp baggage by the main road, and then started myself, with Lalbahadur, at our best pace for the five thousand feet scramble, taking a direct route, irrespective of paths.

The weather, of course, began to break up when we got to the top, and although among the shifting clouds I was able to get some pictures, I never could get one which did real justice to this wonderful mountain face. It was, unfortunately, my last chance of a really good view of the main peak.

We found my wife and all our luggage safely arrived at Gundla, and were soon comfortably settled there. It is a charming little bangalow. That it is most magnificently situated goes without saying, facing as it does such great and impressive mountain scenery. It is a real boon to the few travellers who visit Lahoul to find these little rest-houses—over and above their value to officials on their tours through the country.

Gundla has other charms as well as scenery. There are quite a respectable number of chikore there, as well as blue-rock pigeons. As it was now September, I determined to have a go at them. Previously my shootings at blue-rock pigeons had been confined to a few shots a day, fired with a pad on my damaged shoulder, but now I thought I could probably manage fairly well.

A successful morning produced some sixteen birds, and a few blue-rocks; but, although extra pads had been put in position, my shoulder was bruised black by the evening, and evidently not fit to stand more than a few shots, even through a thick pad of cotton-wool.

The following day found us in Sissu again, but the weather was worse than ever, and an exploration of the big Sissu Glacier, which I had planned, was out of the question; but I managed to scramble, with both my orderlies, up to the point marked as Korapuchi. From thence, in rough and broken weather, we were lucky enough to have one or two fine glimpses of the whole of their climb of the third Gaphan, which we had already named the Sissu Schreckhorn. I was suitably impressed, and again regretted having missed such a very fine expedition.

We had many misgivings about the weather. Masses of clouds were blowing over from the south; not at all what we had expected in the middle of September. However, we thought it better to push on to Koksar, where we had hoped for some fine days so as to complete a good deal of photography which we had left undone, and also to follow in Führer's steps up the Sonapani Glacier, and to continue, if possible, beyond the point he reached.

On our arrival at Koksar we found the bangalow partially occupied by two of the sons of Sirdar Ayoub Khan, the ex-Amir of Kabul, who is now in residence in Lahore. They had gone for the day down to Sissu, and, I am afraid, had a very wet time of it, as the weather broke shortly after our arrival, and, what is more, it continued to rain for three days with hardly any intermission.

Luckily this tremendous downpour proved to be the actual last effect of the Monsoon, like a sperm whale's death, terrific in its dying agony; the worst rain we had experienced the whole season.

These youths were of distinctly sporting tastes, but apparently of not very large experience, as they not only shot crows and choughs, but eat them also, to our intense astonishment—concealed astonishment, of course.

On the weather clearing we made all our arrangements to leave finally Lahoul for good, and to cross the Rahtang south once more. We were both much looking forward to Kulu in the autumn; everyone agreed that the autumn was the finest time to see that charming country.



CHAPTER XI

KULU ONCE MORE

We were on the top of the Rahtang at just the right hour on our way over, and we spent a good time photographing. What a difference from when we crossed in July! Now hardly any snow remained; only a few isolated patches. We had a delightful walk in the freshest and keenest air, and the descent on the Kulu side was simply perfect. Now, however much the ruggedness of Lahoul may appeal to me, after some months it is delightful to meet again the richness of the Kulu Valley; and, indeed, the sudden change is extraordinarily striking. It was far enough on in September for the autumn tints to have touched the higher levels with gorgeous colour, and the forest below, in its dark tones, only served the better to throw up the rich green left by the rains, and there was a freshness in the air very different from the heavy atmosphere of early July.

There were numbers of Tibetan encampments on the flats on the way down, always picturesque with their blue-topped tents. I have seldom enjoyed a march more than the five last miles into Rahla. Kulu was at its best. We had a fine view of our Pindri Peak dominating the entrance to the Solang Valley.

It was very pleasant to reach the Rahla Bangalow, where we had determined to spend an off day in which to wander about and see something of its surroundings—a day by no means wasted. The valley to the south was perfect. The crops were just ripening, and the mixture of the crimson of the amaranth fields gave the richest possible effect, a welcome note of colour after the more neutral tones of Lahoul. I do not think I ever saw such a mass of colours as on our walk down, a day or two later, to the Manali Bangalow, where we arrived on September 18.

We were in no particular hurry, and camp kit had to be overhauled, and we wanted to spend a few days there before continuing our travels. There was also the wily chikore to be followed, although my hopes in their direction had been almost extinguished on the way down, for the tremendous growth, both of grass and jungle, was greatly against chikore-shooting ; the grass was up to one's waist.

The Kulu peasants all round may not be very good at working their country, but they certainly grow magnificent crops. The fields, too, are well watered. The soil, no doubt, is very fine, and amply rewards the slightest attention, but what a living really hard-working Alpine peasants would make out of such a country ! The breed of cattle alone is poor in the extreme; but the Kulu people seemed to me to be entirely lacking in ambition. They are certainly not poor, and have all they have been accustomed to want; further, the women do nearly all the hard work, with the exception of the ploughing. The people will not even travel if they can help it, and have no desire to better themselves in any way; they

can get all they really require at a minimum of exertion.

The whole of the Kulu trade is in the hands of more or less foreign people, either Kulu Mohammedans—settlers from the Panjab, that is to say—or else regular traders, Banniahs, also of the Panjab. And although there are many old-established fruit-gardens, and most productive ones, right through the valley, there is not, I believe, a single native of Kulu who has ever planted fruit-trees, either for his own use or for export, or even for sale in the local bazaars.

I am not blaming them in particular if they have all they desire and are happy, as is apparently the fact. They are like most natives of the East, why should they want more than their forefathers wanted? I am only regretting the more or less wasted possibilities of such a country.

Chikore-shooting proved a complete failure, so after packing our spare kit we left for the Hamta Valley, for I had a good deal that I wished to do there; first and foremost to get a good view of Führer and Lalbahadur's exploration on the slopes of Deotibi, and also, at last, to have a proper view of the valley.

It is a really beautiful walk from Manali. After crossing the Hamta stream the road rises at once through rice cultivation to the village of Shuru, where I had previously failed to get any assistance after my hurt, and thence passes an old and beautifully situated temple standing in its own large paved courtyard, surrounded by magnificent deodar-trees. Whether by accident or from possessing a real sense of the beautiful, whoever built the average Kulu

temple very seldom made a mistake in the selection of sites; they are nearly always well placed.

After leaving the temple a full two thousand feet of steep ascent leads at last to the main valley of the Hamta, and the path winds through beautiful forests and open glades, deep in grass and full of flowers, even as late as the time of our visit.

The right bank of the valley is very precipitous and finely sculptured, and is the habitat of many tahr, a species of Himalayan wild goats; but unfortunately all shooting of large game, with the exception of black bear and leopard in the Hamta, is closed.

We camped about an hour and a half short of Chika, the overhanging rock under which we had pitched our tents when previously crossing from Lahoul, and on a lower level of the deeply-grassed slopes. This camp was much more convenient for us, as it was near the entrance to the nullah leading directly up to Deotibi.

The following morning Lalbahadur, Jitman, and myself climbed up to a point on one of the Deotibi underfeatures to about thirteen thousand feet or so, to try to follow Führer's previous route. We saw a good deal of it, but the point at which they ultimately arrived was buried in masses of cloud; but farther to the south Penguri, and beyond it the great Shigri Peak, were quite clear. The whole ridge leading from Deotibi to Penguri is wonderfully fine; the ice scenery of a really high order, with masses of hanging glacier.

It seemed to me that from where we then stood the mountain ridge would be a very difficult one

to get on to, but when once any of the main ridges had been gained there would be no particular trouble in finding a way up.

The Shigri Mountain beyond was of a different character. The side of it which we were able to see consisted of huge, very broken ridges of the steepest description, and tremendous precipices towards the north—a real savage mountain.

We passed over some splendid open grazing-grounds on our way down, and beat a great deal of open birch jungle for monal pheasants, but without finding any—not a single bird.

We were much pleased with our day, though, and had taken some good photographs. The most successful day of photography, however, came two days later, when we climbed to the top of some fine peaks of about thirteen thousand five hundred feet, as nearly as I could calculate, above Chika. We made a big bag of snow-pigeon on our way up, after a delightful walk from camp, taking lunch with us, and leaving it with my wife in a birch forest. It was a perfect day and one not wasted.

Indra Killah is a most interesting mountain, surmounted by a monolith, apparently about three hundred feet in height—a perfectly isolated needle, and from a distance looking not much thicker at the base than at the top. It gave one the impression of an enormous fist more than anything else, for the rest of the mountain is not particularly impressive. The Deotibi mass to the south was much finer.

The really impressive outlook, from our point, was towards the Lahoul Mountains and the mountains of the Solang, of which we had a unique view, and

could trace all the climbs accomplished by Führer and Lalbahadur.

The Weisshorn dominated everything, and must, I think, be the peak marked nineteen thousand six hundred feet odd, although it certainly gave one the idea that it also slightly overtopped the Gundla Peak 'M,' our Solang 'Blaitière,' the actual peak marked in the map nineteen thousand six hundred feet.

A delightful valley is the Upper Hamta, especially round Chika, which encamping ground was at this time full of life—chiefly Gaddi shepherds and Spiti men returning from Kulu.

The pull up to the Hamta is the dullest drag up imaginable. The whole ascent a dull, shut-in valley, chiefly stones to look at, and at one gentle angle, which always makes one feel as if the road was absolutely endless. I should think it must be a regular snow-trap; there were very deep accumulations when we crossed in June.

Our duty to the landscape being accomplished, we ran down to the luncheon spot, and then all returned to our camp, and the following day back to Manali, as I proposed as nearly as possible to follow Führer's footsteps up that nullah; also to get some pheasant-shooting.

The Manali nullah proper is one of the best shooting nullahs in Kulu for red bear, and probably for tahr. Ibex are also reported there, but of this I am doubtful—that is, of course, of shootable ibex. There are also black bear and many pheasants.

It is a curious but remarkably fine valley, and the forest scenery second to none that I have ever seen. The right bank of the valley, which is probably the

best for red bear, is open and steep, but easy, with many thachs and grazing-grounds—typical red bear country; in fact, I never saw better, whilst the opposite side of the valley is very precipitous and splendidly wooded, and after the rains overgrown to any extent.

Besides rich undergrowth, there were many flowers, especially great groves of pink balsams eight feet high, with stems as thick as a man's wrist. As we passed through these dense masses of balsams, which we often did, they popped and spat at one all the time as they were beginning to go to seed, and their seed pods go off with a pop if touched.

The road to the upper grazing-ground was as rough as one could wish to travel—like travelling in a much overgrown Rishi in Garhwal, and the scale large too.

We found several parties of women upon the slopes and in the forest picking some species of pod, of which they make pickle. I was unable to discover what exact kind of pod it was.

Part of the road to our camp led over a mass of huge boulders of the Plan des Aiguilles type, well covered with an overgrowth of thick vegetation, high grass, and flowers and shrubs exactly so placed as to poke you in the eye when you were making a jump. We finally made a camp on what looked like a lush meadow from afar, with little streams running through it. But it turned out to be a stone-covered flat hidden in the tremendous vegetation. We found a decent enough camping-ground, however.

When these regions were before visited by Führer, there was much snow everywhere at this height, and although by keeping lower down the valley than we

had done the parties on each occasion had had most unpleasant scrambles through jungle, still, on reaching a certain height, they had found good going on plenty of old snow. That was all gone now, and nothing left but rank vegetation and boulders.

For all that the surroundings were splendid, and the colour very fine. Much oak, too, of a dusky coppery hue, which showed up most effectively against the autumn tints, for the hillsides above the forest were all colours, the grasses and shrubs all turning, and adding every description of red and yellow and russet.

Pheasants were a great disappointment. In the early part of the year this upper ground had been full of pheasants, chiefly the monal and koklass, though I believe tragopan pheasants were also seen. Now, though in the evenings and mornings we could hear them in the forest, and also occasionally see them when aroused below us, not one did we put up, and all attempts at reaching them through these tremendous undergrowths were futile. Lower down the Gurkhas went into the forest and put up several birds, but said that all their time was taken up with getting along, and that it was impossible to shoot—at any rate, we never fired a single shot.

I daresay on the farther side of the valley quite good shooting could be obtained, but at this time of year on the left or northern side it is hopeless.

The day after our arrival we made an attempt to reach the uppermost camp from which Führer and Lalbahadur had made their expedition. Their line of advance, up a steepish valley rather more than half a mile from our camp, was now all big stones, and

also required a considerable descent to reach it, so the men told me that by making a short cut over the spur immediately behind our tents we should be able to coast along, and finally gain the bank which led up to the camp. An hour's stone-hopping brought us to the foot of a gully, which had been marked as being probably the most direct route. This turned out to be correct, but the climb up to it was a real 'teaser,' just as steep as one could find. A thick jungle and long grass and stiff bushes.

A Gurkha nearly always has great facility in jungle. I have not. What is more, it particularly annoys me. This ascent, which would have been quite hard work on an open hillside, was beyond anything. Though in first-rate condition, I was soaked through by the time we got out on to the ridge above us. Thence we coasted along the mountain-side, seeing our slopes in front of us, and much envying the previous party.

Both the orderlies had been up the old way two or three times, and were much saddened when they found all the snow gone, except in a few places which did not very much matter. Our coasting took a terrible long time, for the mountain-sides were very steep and entirely composed of enormous boulders, supplying much jumping and other gymnastics—really great fun in itself, but most annoying as taking up so much time. These strenuous efforts, indeed, afforded special exercises for every joint and muscle in the body, including the tongue.

After leaving our big boulders behind us, we got on to the main route—a long pull up rocky, grassy slopes at an easy angle. We continued until lunch-

time. By then we had mounted to a considerable height, and I was bored to extinction, as the reader probably is too by now, so we stopped for lunch, and especially for me to dry my clothes. A bath was also attractive. The water was cold though the sun was strong, the height about fourteen thousand feet. The towel, a hot rock, gave a splendid reaction.

After an excellent lunch taken on the aforesaid hot rock I found it much more expedient to go back than to face another long drag to the col above us, for I cannot say I looked forward with any pleasure as a tired man to those jumping gymnastics amongst the rocks. So telling the obvious fib that I had done all I came to do, we started back again, having finished the necessary laughter, and were soon springing again for dear life to the col.

The descent through the jungle was as scratchy and pokey as the ascent, but luckily the work was not uphill this time, and we got back to camp having had all we wanted in the way of exercise.

A couple more days took us back to Manali, our first night on the way down being spent on a camping-ground formed by the junction of an immense rock and the steep hillside. Here was the finest forest of balsams that we came across—a regular jungle, much above our heads, popping and spitting at us with loud reports.

I was sorry to leave the valley, for we had not seen half of it, and I had wished, if there had been time, to have crossed and had a look at the pass at the head of the main valley which leads over to Bara Banghal.

It is undoubtedly one of the best sporting nullahs of the Kulu district, and quite worth anyone's while

to visit in spring, early summer, or autumn, even if not on sporting intent. The summer months, July and August, are out of the question anywhere in Kulu, as the weather is much too wet for camping with any possible degree of comfort.

On our arrival at Manali Bangalow once more, the camp kit had to be repacked, for now we were really heading for home, and all the heavy, unnecessary luggage was to be sent off by pony transport to Kangra, while we took a light camp and went up the Parvattiya Valley on our way back. In the meantime I went down to rejoin my wife, who had been staying during my trip up the Manali nullah with Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke, at their house at Raisan, some seventeen miles lower down the valley.

The charming Kulu Valley was now at its very best. It is always a pleasant ride or walk by the side of the Beas, passing continually through great glades of fine alders—finer ones I have never seen.

Colonel Tyacke's house at Raisan is extraordinarily English in its surroundings, always excepting, of course, the great mountains on either side and the native villages in the near vicinity.

We were now right amongst the fruit-gardens, the Aramgarh estate, in which Raisan House is situated, being one of the best known and most productive.

The fruit trade is run under very great difficulties, but the post-office has come to the aid of the fruit-growers and exports their fruit for them, by parcel-post. What a tremendous business this is for the post will be understood when it is explained that many thousands of parcels are thus handled, all being

carried by coolies to the nearest cart-road head, whence they can be forwarded by bullock cart or other conveyance to their destination. Much of the fruit is carried by coolies the whole way to Simla. I cannot imagine that it can be anything but a heavy expense to the post-office. It only shows what an immense boon to the fruit trade the cart-road now being made through the Mandi State to Lower Kulu will be.

My wife had spent a charming ten days with the Tyackes, and had enjoyed her well-earned rest; and most opportune it had been, for we had an arduous march before us, and she had had a pretty hard and continuous time of exertion. After two more days spent at Raisan we had to say good-bye to our hosts, to whom we had been beholden for many kindnesses and help throughout our time in Kulu. At Katrain we broke up our party. The main camp equipage went direct to Kangra *en train* for despatch to Abbottabad in charge of Kehar Sing and an orderly, while we packed a light camp for the final trip which we had planned round the eastern valleys, which contained in many ways the most interesting part of all Kulu.

Kehar Sing, the place of our factotum, was taken by a small but most dependable little Gurkha, almost fresh from Nepal, who had been working under him, and whose chief business in life was to grow until such time as he became big enough to enlist. Meanwhile his progress had been remarkable. He was quite capable of running a camp for two, and a most excellent camp servant he was. Up to the previous November he had probably never seen any flat ground, and certainly had never seen a railway. And now, in

September, he had already learnt a certain amount of Hindustani, and had turned into a most useful and intelligent all-round assistant.

At the Katrain Bangalow we found Colonel and Mrs. Farmer. He was a veterinary officer who was travelling with a view of introducing a better breed of sheep into the hills.

He gave us most interesting accounts of his work—how he had lived much with the Gaddi shepherds, and, being an expert, was able to help them in all sorts of ways with their flocks. He also brought with him some Merino rams, and told us that there was already a considerable number of half-breeds that were giving quite satisfactory results. By living with the nomad shepherds and gaining their confidence, and by showing how much more he knew about their business than they did themselves, he was certainly going the right way to work.

Apparently the fleeces of these sheep do not give a very good return. The quality of the wool is not very high class, nor, though they look large, is the fleece very heavy, the wool being so straight. The cross with the Merino strain immediately gives an infinitely heavier and finer fleece, and should also produce animals not too heavy or clumsy for the bad ground they habitually feed on. We saw some of the shawls made locally from the fleeces of these half-bred sheep, and they were really of fine quality, a fact quite appreciated by the local native who puts a high price on them. There is certainly a large field here for experiment.

At the time of the great emigration, when all the flocks are driven over the Rahtang and Hamta Passes

up to the blue grass grazing-grounds of Lahoul, and the Lingti Plains, and of Spiti, there must be about two hundred thousand sheep driven through Kulu, irrespective of local sheep owned by Kulu peasants. I have heard a considerably higher estimate, but am probably not far wrong in the round number I have given.

Hardly any of the wool of these sheep appears at the Patseo Market. There the wool is almost entirely Tibetan, or Zaskar, or Rudok, or Lahouli. The Tibetan sheep seemed to carry a very large but loose fleece, and would be much the better for a cross of Merino, if it could be brought about, but the Tibetan sheep are a hardy lot, and have to put up with a much harder life than the flocks from the south, and probably, even if a cross were possible, the Merino strain would not stand their climate and surroundings, for Patseo, with an altitude of twelve thousand three hundred feet, is very likely the lowest place they reach during their hard lives. All the same, there is plenty of room for endeavour to improve the breed of sheep and still more that of cattle. The cattle are wretched throughout these hills, but the same remark holds good for the greater part of the Himalaya. For reform in these matters, besides capital, of which there is very little, and Government help, there is also needed desire among the people themselves for better things, and that desire apparently does not exist.

The expedition which we planned from Katrain was to pass through Naggar, the seat of Government, and to visit the curious village at Malana, in which valley lives a small community who are quite separate from the rest of Kulu, in language and tradition, and

in appearance also; though this latter contrast does not perhaps strike one at first sight.

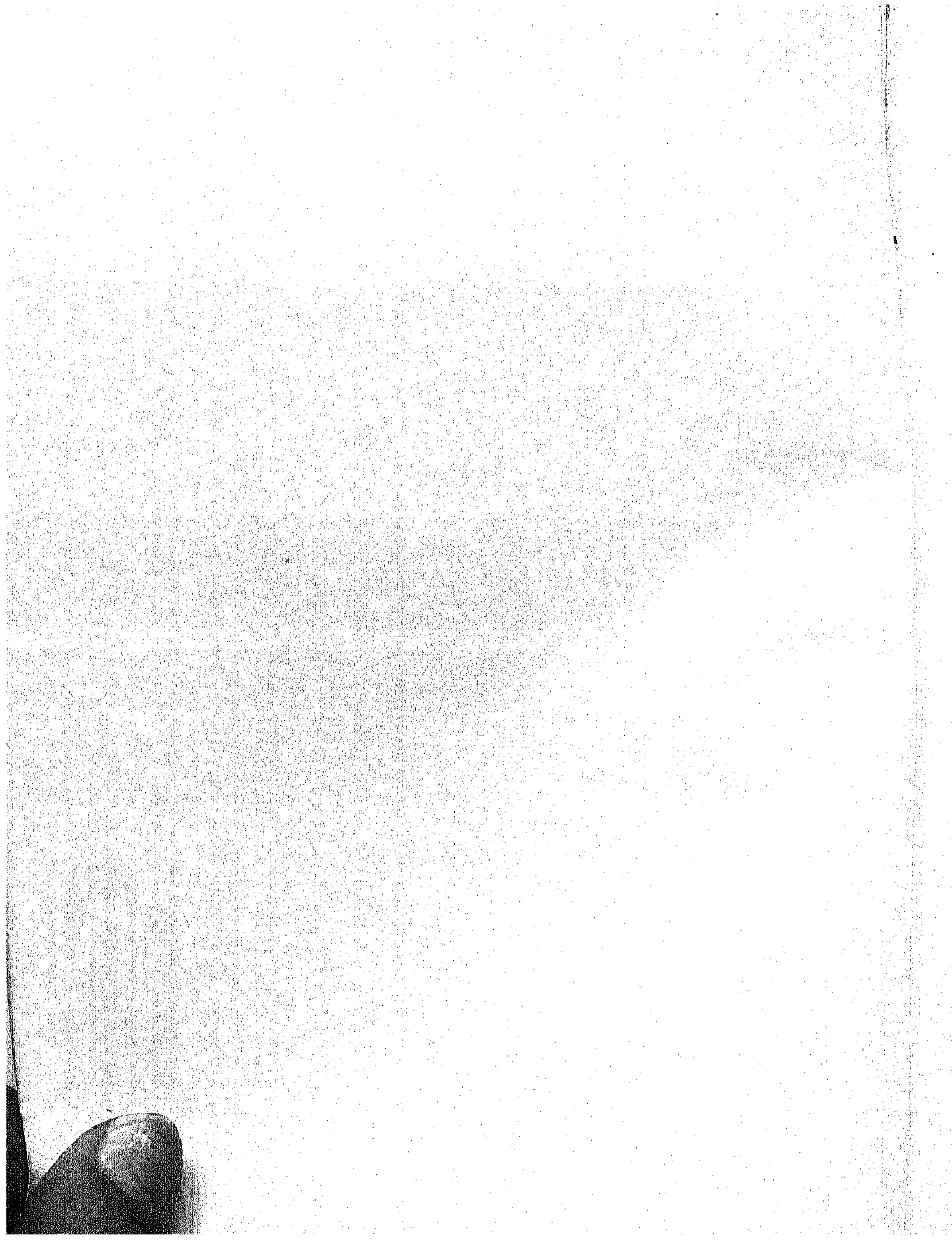
The Malana folk are certainly very interesting relics, and their secluded valley and village a regular little mountain fastness, cut off from Kulu on the northern side by the Chandra-Khani, and from the Parvattiya nullah on the southern side by the Rushok Pass, both very steep hill-tracks and of considerable height, the Rushok being ten thousand five hundred feet. The only other way into the valley is down an absolutely precipitous gorge which emerges at Chilant village, and along which the only track is of the nature of a rock-climb the whole way. It would be difficult to find a more secluded community. Our road to it led us over the Chandra-Khani Pass, nearly twelve thousand feet in altitude.

The approach to Naggar from Katrain is charming. Here the main stream of the Beas is crossed by an excellent suspension bridge, and the valley is broad and park-like, and the alder groves splendid. A shady lane leads up to Naggar Castle, now the official residence of the Assistant-Commissioner who administrates Kulu. In former times it was the royal centre of Kulu, but the capital was moved to Sultanpur.

Naggar is beautifully situated, a good height above the river and valley, over which it has a wide view. It is also of greater importance than Sultanpur, as there are at least half a dozen European houses scattered about its picturesque hillside, above which fine deodar forest stretches. Naggar is said to have been the seat of the Rajahs of Kulu for over sixty reigns, the present castle having been built out of the ruins of the ancient palace.



Sheep shearing at Patseo.



It is a very fine old pile, constructed of age-darkened timbers and stone, but guiltless of mortar. Three stories in height, it stands up in an imposing manner, and behind it is the old temple, and around it a gay flower-garden, which was the pride of the last Assistant-Commissioner, Mr. Howell, and his wife. At this time of year the colour both of the garden beds and the surrounding country was simply brilliant, and not only of the flowers and fields, but every roof of the peasants' houses glowed with the rich amber of the Indian corn spread on the roofs to dry, and below the crimson of the amaranth swept the valley in broad touches, while the blue and indigo of distant hillside and forest were lighted with the yellow of the turning trees and grass, snowy peaks completing the picture.

We were lucky enough to see both the spring and autumn views, and although the snow on the hillsides in the earlier season gives a greater contrast, and shows up the forest and valley, still we both agreed in preferring the autumn colouring. I have never seen anything so brilliant on so large a scale.

We divided our march over the Chandra-Khani Pass into two stages, sleeping the night at the extremely pretty village of Phulga, or Phulinga, a full march from Katrain. The pull up from Katrain to the top of the pass is at least seven thousand feet, probably more.

Phulinga is a typical Kulu village, well situated on the hillside of the valley running back from Naggar, up which we were progressing, well cultivated on its lower slopes, rather precipitous above. We found a

fine camping-ground three or four hundred feet higher up than the village, in a nice open glade in the forest, where we were well looked after by most obliging people; in fact, the Kulu folk improve mightily as one gets away from the main valley of the Beas. Not only that, but we found a great difference even on the following morning, for the march is a longish one to the top of the pass, and steep and tiring, and 'dandy' carriers and porters were quite the best we had yet come across in Kulu.

I was off a little ahead of the party, in pursuit of monal, of which there was supposed to be plenty. But after a good deal of scrambling I was obliged to put up with their usual chaffing ways. There certainly were plenty of them, but they were off as usual, very light, never letting one get within a couple of hundred yards of them.

Our way led through beautiful forest, and for the last hour and a half, sideways across the hillside. Fine open country, which with the forest, shrubs, and grass, was gorgeous with autumn colouring, a very brilliant show.

In the open scrub jungle below the path our caravan put up a number of monal, and if we had had time to spend a day or two wandering about, we could, no doubt, with the exercise of some cunning, have annexed a few of them. When they do come, they come at a terrific pace, whizzing downhill or across valleys. They are also very large birds—quite twice the weight of the biggest cock pheasant, and, therefore, unless one is absolutely on the spot, take some stopping. The great thing to remember is that

every bird's head is the same size, and that the size of shot one uses matters less than being far enough in front, which is the great difficulty. From the top of the Chandra-Khani Pass we could see right down the Malana Valley, which lay absolutely plumb down below us, as steep and shut-in country as I have seen. It reminded me very much of some of the Upper Garhwal valleys, particularly in the mixture of tremendous scenery, cliff, and open forest.

On the summit of the pass there was much 'puja' to the gods, or 'demotas,' for every mountain has its suitable presiding deity of one kind or another, and stones were set up for us in deference to the wishes of the same deity, as it was our first time of crossing the pass. This appears to be the ordinary custom, as the Malana people went through the same manœuvres when we crossed the Rushok into the Parvattiya Valley. We got a fine view of the Gaphan and the redoubtable 'M,' but the Hamta Mountains were shut off.

Having enjoyed a rest and lunch in the keen air, and a fine view of what was new country to us—the south and east—we proceeded to tackle the descent. After half a mile or so the Phulinga coolies turned off down a sharp spur, one of the orderlies electing to accompany them; but this was evidently too steep for the dandy and for the more heavily laden men or those carrying tent-poles, so we followed the beaten track. The Phulinga men were really first-rate, as very shortly we found ourselves going along as steep a track as one could wish to walk down in the ordinary way; that is, without actually climbing. The path

led in sharp zigzags down a gully between very finely wooded cliffs. Quite good going for an unburdened man, but very difficult for the dandy. Indeed, for any ordinary dandy it would have been quite out of the question, but with our single bamboo pole and hammock seat it was possible. A very short distance even with that was enough, and my wife soon took to her legs. The path, too, got steeper and steeper, and down and down we went, always in the gully, finally emerging actually on to the fields of Malana, and quite close to the village. The gully must be quite three thousand feet in depth, and the whole descent close on four thousand feet.

We arrived at our camp under some big walnut-trees between the two villages of Malana well before the coolies, who had taken the short cut. They would have done better to have taken our way, as all our awkward loads arrived with us, whilst their lesser ones took a good bit longer. Jitman, who had been with the coolies, described the path as simply a ladder of rocks the whole way. These two paths apparently furnish the only entrance into Malana direct from Naggar and the north.

We found ourselves on a big bench on the mountain-side on which are situated the two small villages. The upper one was sacred, and no one was allowed in with leather boots, although we were conducted round on changing into the rope shoes we brought from Kulu. This village also contains the temple of the Malana god Jamlu.

The upper village has many more dwelling-houses, but is of no particular holiness. Both, as a whole, are

dirtier and scrubbier than the usual Kulu village, and the houses are not so well built nor so clean in their surroundings.

The temples have little to recommend them, though the holy of holies, the abode of the extremely autocratic Jamlu, has some rude carving outside. Considering what a swell their god is, I think he ought to be better housed. He is also extremely well off, as besides his property in Malana, he owns several small estates in Kulu which pay him well, his revenue being collected yearly by his Malana subjects. He is the only one of the Kulu deities who pays no respect to Ragonath-ji, the senior god who lives in Sultanpur, and receives the homage from all the surrounding gods when they are carried in to salaam to his triumphal car. The knowledgeable Gopoo told me more of him. In spite of his aloofness, he apparently is not quite lonely, as he is a great friend of the god of the Gaphan, who, according to Gopoo, comes over once a year and spends some time with Jamlu in Malana.

Knowing that there was no image or temple of the Gaphan deota, I asked Gopoo how he came. 'Oh!' said Gopoo, 'he doesn't allow anyone to carry him. Sometimes he comes through the air and sometimes he hops along on a stick' (he has no legs, apparently!). 'But, Gopoo,' I asked, 'if he hops along, someone may possibly have seen him coming?' 'Oh yes,' was the answer; 'I have, two or three times!' Pretty good for a Mohammedan! Among other advice tendered to me in Kulu was a warning not to believe all the people told me about their gods, as they made up stories to please. I found this advice unnecessary;

they were all so well vouched for that naturally I believed them all.

There are, I am told, little figures of local heroes in the Malana temple, including a representation of the Emperor Akbar the Great—a curious thing to find in a nominally Hindu temple. Of course their worship has little in common with real Hinduism, of which the people are probably profoundly ignorant.

Most of the villagers were absent, as this was harvest-time, and their fields were situated on both sides of the valley—in short, wherever it could be cultivated—and extended also for at least a couple of miles further up-stream. We noticed, too, many scattered houses on almost every cultivated part far away from the village, which gave an appearance of the existence of a considerable population outside the village itself, but this turned out to be misleading. These houses were 'dogri'—that is to say, not the homes, but the spring and autumn quarters where the people only stayed during sowing and reaping time, returning after those seasons to their real homes in the village. Indeed, there are not many houses in the two villages, and the population cannot possibly be more than five hundred, and yet they live completely isolated from the rest of Kulu, have different laws of their own, speak a language peculiar to themselves, and live their own life. Very wisely they are not interfered with, and are allowed to settle their own business in their own way. A most harmless, even though independent, little community. They were a scrubby lot, smaller on the average than the ordinary Kulu man, but very tough, and who would

not live in such surroundings if he could? All the men and women in the valley must, however, be related, as apparently they do not marry outside their own clan.

Several of the young men we saw had exceptionally refined faces, with very clearly cut features, and they would have been extremely good-looking if one cut away a considerable amount of loose hair from face and head, and expended several pounds of soap and many tubs of hot water on them. Not washing from one's youth up cannot but take away from one's personal attractions. During many travels through the Himalaya, now running beyond a score of years, I have noticed this fact.

The Malana people are a survival, but a survival of what people it is beyond me to say. Mr. Fitzgerald Lee, in his small guide-book to Kangra and district, has a short account of this curious folk. He connects their language with ancient Hunnish, and mentions that, on the authority of facts supplied by him, Professor Vambéry came to the conclusion that the Malana people were probably a branch of the same family now represented by Turks, Magyars, Finns, etc. This is as it may be, but the features of the best-looking of the men resemble the highest Rajput type, to my mind.

We both liked them, for when our porters came they proved to be the most cheerful and willing of any men we had up to that time employed. Although the dandy carriers were excellent, they were quite small men, and though they made nothing of their loads, they were none of them heavy-limbed.

In order to get out of the Malana Valley the Rushok Pass over to Rushok village has to be crossed. The rise from Malana is about three thousand feet, but it is considerably added to by five hundred feet or more of descent to the river and bridge at the start. Thence the path rises through splendid forest scenery, very steep, and growing more acutely so as we followed the zigzags. The men made nothing of it, carrying the dandy at a wonderful pace, my wife occasionally putting in good spells of walking, however. All the same, they were, with the exception of the great lusty Bhotias of Darjeeling, the fastest dandy men I have ever seen. But it would take two of these little Malana men to make one Bhotia.

On the top of the Rushok Pass we went through all the business of setting up stones; at least, our porters insisted on doing it on our behalf, to please the gods, setting up two special ones for us newcomers. Gopoo, the pious Mohammedan, helped as usual: gods are kittle cattle even for him.

We had a good look on our way up at the main Malana Valley, and at the track which joins the Parvattiya at Jhari, a fearsome path down a most impressive and precipitous gorge. Immense cliffs, many thousand feet high on each side, dominated at the end of the valley by a mass of mountains, and the best part of eight thousand feet of precipices. No more desperate country have I seen in the lower heights of the mountains. No wonder the people of Malana have been able to lead their own life unmolested for so many centuries, when the easiest way into their country is by our Rushok Pass, on which, by-the-bye, we enjoyed a well-earned lunch.

We began our descent in another gully, which made us think we were going to repeat our previous performance; but after a very steep descent, we turned again on to the face of the mountain, and continued by a slightly less steep route for some three thousand feet down to Rushok village, which is situated on the steep slopes of the mountain in a bay, surrounded by well-cultivated fields cut in terraces, on one of which we camped in bivouac tents. There was no space for anything more roomy. From our camp, at a height of about seven thousand feet, we had a magnificent view of the limestone gorge to the bottom of the valley, down which our route evidently lay, to the main Parvattiya stream. The afterglow of the sunset also lit up a great mass of mountains on the south side—a really terrific mountainscape.

The following morning we were up betimes and had a steep scramble down narrow rocky tracks for a couple of hours, over avalanche débris. It was during the great earthquake that these hillsides fell. The road looked pretty loose, and there were signs of small avalanches in many places. We crossed a really big one which looked quite fresh. It had made a tremendous mess of the valley and bed of the stream.

On our way down we saw some gooral feeding on the hillside. They did not seem to mind us, and continued to graze as if little disturbed. We also put up a good many kallidge pheasants, and took our toll of them.

The kallidge is a very confiding bird compared to other Himalayan pheasants. He also flies well if

given time, and if the country is suitable; but, generally speaking, when put up near the gun, is a bad, slow starter, and not difficult to secure. He is good eating when hung long enough, but, in my opinion, not nearly so good as the koklass, who is excellent when he has had time to do himself justice.

CHAPTER XII

THE PARVATTIYA NULLAH

LEAVING the rocky Rushok Valley, we joined the Parvattiya Nullah near the village of Chilaul, and found ourselves on a fairly good road once more. It was a delicious morning, and we entered the new valley with pleasurable anticipation.

The whole of the Parvattiya is called the Waziri Rupi, or the silver district, and it is a very large and widespread valley, with many branches, and forms a magnificent centre for the wanderer.

Among natives it is chiefly known as holding the Manikarn hot springs and temples, a well-known place of pilgrimage throughout these hills. And not only locally is it famed, for a number of devotees journey hither to bathe and worship from many parts of Upper India.

The general scale of the valley is a large one, and from its appearance one would more readily take it to be a main valley instead of what it is, one of the branches of the Beas. I should fancy that in flood time the Parvattiya must carry down nearly as much water as the main Beas itself.

It is a good long morning's march from Rushok to Manikarn, and the longer half up the valley only comparatively good travelling, the 'fairly good road'

one often describes being, after all, not much more than a village track. Still, in spite of the stone, it was easy going after the descent from Rushok.

On the other side of the river we could see the main road from the Kulu Valley, an excellent mule track, and we hoped we should soon meet it. But it did not cross the river to the right bank on which Manikarn, our destination, is situated, till within a quarter of a mile of that place. Our path was in many places again over small avalanche tracks, all of which we were told came down in the great earthquake.

The valley is undoubtedly very fine, as are the forest, road, and river, the latter at this time generally flowing calmly. All had a tidy look, which reminded me rather of Switzerland. There is not, of course, in the whole of the Alps a valley of these dimensions which is so rich or so much enclosed. That is one of the real differences between European and Himalayan valleys.

We were now at between four and five thousand feet only above the sea, or rather less than the height of Zermatt, while the peaks of which we occasionally caught glimpses rose from seventeen to over twenty thousand feet. The higher valleys of the Waziri Rupi hold a fine series of twenty and twenty-one thousand footers.

The valley narrows very much as Manikarn is approached, where the main road crosses the Parvattiya. This fine river passes through an extremely narrow gorge of great depth, which in places one could almost jump across.

Manikarn village is tucked away under a steep, rocky hillside, but it gives one notice of its presence

some time before one arrives there. The last mile, in fact, holds signs of hot springs, and the smell of sulphur and jets of steam announce to the traveller that his march is wellnigh at an end. It is quite an interesting place, but very steamy from the number of springs round which it is built. At the time of year that we visited Manikarn, quite the end of September, it was very fairly warm in the middle of the day, and no doubt must be distinctly hot in June and the beginning of July, but the account often given of it as 'very hot and dirty' does not treat it quite fairly. Neither can a spot which is only a hundred and fifty yards or so in total length be described as 'unhealthy,' especially when it is as much washed as Manikarn is. Steamy and slack no doubt it is, but only for a hundred yards each way. It has a nice little bangalow, which contains a natural hot-water tank, or, rather, the hot water is turned into a tank or bath under the roof of the bangalow, and is, moreover, protected from contamination, so that travellers can bathe safely in it, and very pleasant it was. The water runs off the whole time, and a fresh supply runs in.

There are several temples and bathing-houses, as well as exposed springs. The temples are not particularly interesting, nor the bathing establishments very attractive, especially when one saw the kind of bathers who were using them.

The exposed springs were of different temperatures. The hottest, close to the river, was at boiling-point apparently, for the people were cooking their rice in it. They tie up their food in a cloth, and then throw it into the water, which was bubbling like a

huge saucepan of boiling water. As a strong smell of sulphur was given off, it did not seem a very appetizing manner of cooking, but my people cooked some of their food there as an experiment, and said it had absolutely no taste of sulphur.

Apparently non-Hindus may not defile the springs used for cooking, and even the all-round Gopoo was not allowed to put his rations into them. Cooking meat in the sacred waters would, of course, not be permitted. I believe the springs have no medicinal effect when drunk, but probably are useful to people who suffer from rheumatism and do not obtain an adequate amount of hot water. Here they can soak to their hearts' content. Certainly a good many of the frequenters of Manikarn could be boiled for good in the springs without much loss to the world in general.

There are no fresh-water springs close to the village, so drinking-water comes from the main Parvattiya, and is better taken from the river above the beginning of the village.

We had a fresh lot of porters and dandy men at Manikarn, not so good as the men we had left, but still willing enough, and the next day we pushed on to Phulga, or, again, in local parlance, Phulinga.

We had received permission to use the excellent forest bangalow there, and were looking forward to spending a few days up the valley, and getting a good view of the upper part of the Waziri Rupi. I also had hopes of chikore and pheasant shooting.

After leaving Manikarn, one very shortly passes a side-stream running down from a valley to the north, which boasts a magnificent group of aiguilles. I

did not get a really good look at this group, which I still regret, but the rock needles were of the highest, and would take their place with any fancy rock climb in the world. A most attractive group to have explored, if we had had *time* to spend over side-valleys, and further, to have photographed.

From this angle of the road it becomes roughish in places where there are steps over jutting-out rocks too steep for the dandy, but a good walking-road, very up-and-down. The scenery is of the finest valley order, and of a rich—what I might call Kashmiri-Swiss—type; rather different from the rest of Kulu.

After about an hour we passed near the village of Uchieh, opposite to which, on the left bank of the river, are some old silver mines, no longer worked. I fancy there is silver in considerable quantities, but the cost of extraction and working, and especially of carriage to market, are so high in proportion as to make it not worth while to work unless the output were very large, and this there seems to be no chance of.

It is a full morning's walk from Manikarn to Phulga Bridge, all interesting, and in many places very striking, and the river and forest scenery always beautiful. The river was much blocked with deodar logs, for the Kulu Forest Department is very busy in these parts, and the forests must be of great value, and the timber can be got away pretty easily. There were tremendous blocks in some places, and a good many men were employed getting the logs back into the current; but it struck us that they were very much behind time, as so late in September no more floods could be expected, and the river was sinking daily.

I met a native official of the Forest Department engaged in surveying for a new road from Manikarn to Phulga, which will make this part of the valley easy of access. When completed, this should make a tour up from the Kulu Valley very easy.

Phulga, and the little group of villages near it, is the last settlement in the valley; the country opens out to a certain extent, and there is a considerable amount of cultivation.

The river is crossed by a good suspension bridge, and a steep climb of eight or nine hundred feet takes one up through Phulga village to the forest bangalow, at a height of about seven thousand three hundred feet above the sea. We were delighted with the whole surroundings. The bangalow is very comfortable, and had a good supply of miscellaneous literature—illustrated papers in great numbers, always amusing to look at.

Phulga would make first-rate headquarters for a shooting or wandering trip up the valley, and we regretted that we had not plenty of time instead of only a day or two to spare.

Opposite the bangalow, on the right bank of the river, is a very prominent point directly over the road. It was evident that a camera taken to this point would produce good effects. So, accompanied by the local shikari and a forest guard, both of whom said that they knew the country, I climbed to the top of this point, some five thousand feet above the river. A great part of the way passed through the loathly scrub jungle, then up into beautiful forest.

The weather at this time is invariably gorgeous—the finest part of the year. But the mountain peaks,

unless they are of the first class, and there is much glacier about, are generally rather bare and hard. Our point proved a great success, and amply repaid us for a pretty laborious scramble; it also gave us a chikore or two. We set up the map and got an approximate reading of eleven thousand three hundred feet on the point which we reached.

We could see all the Upper Parvattiya Valley and one of its branches, the name of which, the shikari said, was Misuora. The main valley diminished rather in interest, as far as the valley itself was concerned. It was long and shut in, and I expect very stony after the forest belt was passed.

The mountains on each side were very fine, and there appeared to be magnificent peaks at the far end. But from about ten thousand feet of elevation, what masses and masses of boulders on nearly all the banks of the northern side of the valley! The early part of the year would evidently be the time to travel and explore these branches, when there is plenty of winter snow to make walking easy. Nearly every peak seemed to be surrounded with acres and acres of boulders.

Most of the peaks were of a gymnastic and rocky description, and directly to our north some terrific rock pyramids, called Papidhannis. There were plenty of the most formidable summits, and if there had only been time, I should certainly have had a dash at the giant snowy peaks to our south, directly behind Phulga Bangalow. The mountains are not only very beautiful, but fairly easy to work, and the approaches to them, at all events, are easier at this time of year. For the mountain immediately behind

Phulga I was given the name of Bashinag, which sounds much more like a Kashmir name for a mountain than a Kulu one. Also, with the help of the map and the shikari, I got names for a number of points which I have now marked down on the attached map.

I do not think that at present there is much shooting done in the Parvattiya Nullah, though the country east of us seemed to be typical burhel ground, and I expect far back on the Spiti border they are pretty sure to be found, while red bear should be a certainty. I believe there are no ibex at all; at least, I could not get the shikari to admit that he had seen any, although he seemed to know all about burhel. Tahr, lower down, there must be, as the country, especially on the right bank, is exactly what they want, and to follow tahr on those tremendous cliffs must try the best head and climbing powers. It is worth while in the autumn to spend time in all the forest parts of the Parvattiya for bird-shooting, if one's pleasure lies in that direction. From the top of the main valley lies a way into Spiti which might afford sport, and would, anyhow, be an interesting entry; but it is a real big country, and the sportsman must be prepared for very hard work.

The Phulga people seemed to me to be rather above the regular Kulu folk. Quite primitive, of course, but unspoilt by the continual fairs which are the bane of the main valley in the frequent opportunities they afford for drink. These people very seldom descend, possibly only to the great Dasehra Festival, which is held at Sultanpur in October, and even then I doubt if more than a few of them go down so far. The few men with whom I was brought into contact

seemed to be a good sort, and very strong too, to judge by the porters we employed on our return march.

To go back, however, to our point. We spent the best part of an hour on top, and then spread out on the farther side of the hill, just to give me the chance to get below and beat the open jungle in the hopes of putting up a monal. We put up plenty, but none passed near enough to make a possible shot—the usual way with monal.

However, we continued aiming at the luncheon place where my wife had settled to meet me with a big pot of tea, and then, after a rest, we intended to beat for chikore on the way home.

On our way down, after some three thousand feet of descent, we passed through cultivated hillsides, and were lucky enough to put up several coveys of chikore, which looked well for the afternoon. We soon reached the luncheon spot and found the tea too. After a good rest we again took the hillside, and had really a tremendous scramble on very steep ground, through the thickest scrub. The chikore were on the cliff above us all right, but came down like greased lightning, very hard to hit, especially as the walking was of the most awkward—on the side of one's foot, and through thick undergrowth. However, a sufficient bag was secured, and a very tired sportsman crossed the river and slowly crept up the long slope to the forest house and a boiling hot bath, thanking the stars that there was such a luxury in store for him. How perfectly refreshing a real hot bath would have been after some of our hard days on the Kakti and other strenuous expeditions!

We had now really to start on our final journey homewards. Our plans had so worked out that we were unable to return by Sultanpur as at one time we had intended, so as to see the Dasehra Fair, which is quite the biggest 'tamasha' of the year in Kulu. We should have seen all the valley people in their very best clothes and ornaments, and, what was more, their best behaviour. The latter, however, would have stood the strain of the first day only. The gods, too would, all have been there, and there would have been sports of all kinds as well. There would also have been a prodigious number of assorted smells, and a greater number of drunk and incapables than at probably any other meeting of the same size in Asia. So we did not particularly mind missing it after all.

The marches to the Kulu Valley are very fine, and the walk in itself was delightful. If, in addition, one has time, they also provide quite good bird-shooting. We had to do the best we could during our marches, and were successful in keeping our larder supplied, getting a good number of kallidge pheasants, and at Chang a capital evening's chikore shoot.

The scenery at Jhari, one march from Manikarn, is well worth a visit in itself. This village lies on a bench on the left bank of the river, and opposite the entrance to the Malana Valley.

Divest this country of its splendid forest and luxuriant growth, and, at this time, wonderful colouring, and it would have a fearsome aspect. The southern face of the Kringcha Mountain drops nearly eight thousand feet plumb into the Parvattiya River, and the hillsides farther, into and surrounding the

Malana Nullah, are almost equally precipitous; but all was softened down and immensely increased in general beauty by the colour and richness of the finest scenery on all sides, and set off this difficult country to its great advantage. It is, however, neither so hopeless-looking nor so stupendous as the Rishi Valley in Garhwal, although it has much the same characteristics, with the exception always of the Parvattiya Valley, into which it debouches.

From Jhari, too, one gets a magnificent view of the great peaks at the head of the valley, which are well thrown up into the air from this distance, and do themselves justice, much more so than when one is directly beneath them.

We were very comfortable here in the little bangalow, and much appreciated the large walnut-trees and their nuts; we bought some hundreds of the fresh nuts, which are the best.

Chung, the next march, was not very far, of which I was glad, as I hoped to put in a long afternoon after chikore.

It was a most picturesque village, beautifully situated on a spur, jutting out from the mountain-side. Unfortunately, camping-grounds away from the village are hard to find, and the village was by no means clean. But we were only going to spend one night there, so it mattered but little.

That evening and the following morning we went after chikore, and were fairly successful, and our wanderings were really ended when we joined that afternoon the main Simla road at Buin. Not a very long day, although rather a hot march, but always picturesque and interesting.

All the way down from Phulga we had constantly been overtaken by, or had overtaken many, flocks of sheep, all returning from their high pastures, where they had spent the summer. I do not remember seeing any of our old friends the Gaddi shepherds, and I believe all the flocks were owned locally, and belonged either to Kulu or Saraj. One great feature was the delightful dogs with every flock. Most of the sheep-dogs in the hills, though often very handsome, fine animals, are morose and unfriendly to strangers, but time after time we came across the most delightful creatures, not only the biggest we had seen, but much the best treated, who, after introduction to us, immediately became quite friendly.

Very formidable animals they are too, as they need to be in order to protect the sheep. There is always some anxiety on account of one's own dogs in Kulu when camping near forests, as the wily leopard has no objection to dog for dinner as a change from lamb. A friend of ours had her little dog snapped up just outside the Dak Bangalow at Manali two years ago. As we were travelling the same way as the sheep, we now and then met the same flocks again, and consequently the dogs, who several times recognized us, and said: 'How de!' I never saw a single dog that looked anything but well treated or well fed, and nothing in their manners that reminded one of the pi-dog of India. Their masters seemed proud of them, and, indeed, they would fare badly without their sheep-dogs. The shepherds were amused when we learnt some of the dog's names.

Our faces were really now turned towards home, and the following morning found us in Bajaura and

close to Colonel Rennick's house and large fruit-gardens.

It was more than ever brought to our notice how very unsatisfactory, or, rather, unenterprising, the Kulu people are, for there must by now be a number of peasants in the valley who have been employed in the large and well-run fruit-gardens throughout Kulu, and must have a good knowledge of fruit-growing and other more advanced forms of gardening, and yet I do not believe there is a single peasant who has used his knowledge in any way for his own benefit, except, of course, in getting employment on the gardens themselves.

From Bajaura, the easiest way into Kulu, because it is open the whole year round, branches off the road that leads over the Dulchi Pass to Mandi or to Kangra, the Dulchi being only about six thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and therefore not subject to a heavy snowfall, even in the hardest winter.

From Bajaura began our straight march into Simla by the main road, which is an excellent mule track, and, as I before said, a very picturesque and interesting road.

From Bajaura to Larji, which is situated at the junction of the Rivers Sainj and Tirthan with the Beas, is a journey of twelve miles, the greater part passing through rather highly cultivated country.

The hills on each side are dull in outline, but, as usual, well wooded and holding fine forest. During the last few miles the road narrows very much, and the scenery becomes bold and rather precipitous. At the junction at Larji the Beas sweeps round to the west and enters a very narrow gorge, passing into

the Mandi State. It is up this gorge that a cart-road is now being made which should be of immense benefit to Kulu and its fruit trade.

It is a very fine gorge of the typical lower Himalayan type, and if by chance, at some future date, one is enabled to drive through it, quite a sensational approach to the Kulu Valley would be achieved. What a pleasure it would be to be able to drive right through from the plains into Kulu instead of the long tramp with ponies, and what an immense boon this large and beautiful country ought to be to India if brought within reach — almost another, though a smaller, Kashmir. Unfortunately for that scheme, the only really suitable site for a large number of camps would be in the neighbourhood of Manali, and I am afraid it would take some time before polo grounds or golf links could be established there. I fear, too, that an influx of summer camps—a real Kashmir-like influx—would be considered terribly hard on the people, as they would almost certainly, whether they liked it or not, have to earn a little money, and possibly, though not necessarily, have to do a little work. But I am sure that the Mohammedan population would make a good bit out of visitors without getting upset, and so would professional merchants of all kinds.

The Sainj River must be worth a visit, both to see the country and for the sake of sport. Both the upper ends of the Sainj and Tirthan Rivers are seldom visited and very little shot. I was informed that the roads were difficult, and that supplies were almost nil. That little obstacle could be easily got over, however. At any rate, if a sporting tour is made in Kulu, it

would well repay to visit the Sainj and Tirthan fairly early in the year.

The journey up the valley of the latter river, until the road turns south, via Banjar and Jibi, and over the Jalaori Pass, is all picturesque, and especially the little white-washed village of Manglaor.

The houses are all well grouped, like Kulu houses in shape, but with gleaming white-washed walls which add greatly to their appearance.

The crossing of the Jalaori Pass is always pleasant. The forest is so fine, and at this time of year the atmosphere is brilliant. From the summit the road coasts along the hillside in three and a half stages, arriving at the Sutlej and passing the three very picturesque rest-houses of Kôte, Chawai, and Dalash. They are all very pretty, but Kôte especially so—a delightful smiling landscape.

At Arni, near Dalash, the Salvation Army has a settlement, on which is a farm where practical agriculture is taught, also jam-making and other useful and productive industries — a most valuable effort, and deserving of all support.

On our way over the pass we met numbers of villagers hurrying off to the Sultanpur Dasehra Fair, many of them carrying their deotas, or gods, with them. We were amused with one party who had taken their god to pieces, and were carrying him in small loads on their backs. The chief figure of the god was tucked under one man's arm as if it had been an umbrella, and the only respect paid to the deity was that the very small band accompanied him and occasionally tuned up. We stopped that procession, and the god was introduced to us.

Once across the Sutlej you are on the main road to Simla, and on the main road also of Dak Bangalows, but they are of a most inferior character, and yet double charges are levied. The accommodation is decidedly poor, and in nothing have the bangalows marched with the times, especially considering their proximity to the summer capital.

We were lucky enough to get off early from Luri, the rest-house on the banks of the Sutlej, and so accomplished our long climb of six thousand five hundred feet to Narkanda before lunch-time.

The forty miles of road from this stage into Simla is so good that the Simla rickshaw men will run one out in a day—pretty fair going, considering that there is a good deal of up and down hill to be negotiated. The mountains of the snowy range remained more or less clouded during the whole of our journey to Simla, but at Phagu for a short time the horizon cleared, and among other summits our Solang Weisshorn stood out well. It was pleasant to see such old friends.

Thus ended, on our arrival in Simla the following morning, six and a half months of pretty continuous travelling. Not a serious exploration, rather a prolonged Alpine tour, and, in truth, Kulu travel is very pleasant; and if one follows the rules that are laid down and gives plenty of warning of one's requirements, there is little or no trouble to be feared. Of course, being accompanied by a man who knows the people and the country, like our assistant Gopoo—in whom we found a competent guide for Lahoul and Spiti as well as Kulu—makes everything much easier, and simplifies matters all round.

Supplies, too, should be laid in when opportunity

offers. Ordinary stores can be obtained at Sultanpur, where there are two or three merchants; but, naturally, there are many things they do not stock, and nothing can be obtained on the road by either of the routes, even eggs and milk and fowls are a difficulty. We heard that it was very hard to buy sheep from the Gaddi shepherds, but such was not our experience. A little friendly talk, tea, and a little quinine or other medicine, if they were in need of it, smoothed away any difficulties; in fact, on two or more occasions Gaddis brought in sheep to sell of their own accord. There was nothing the matter with the animals either.

Kulu cannot be classed as a first-rate sporting country. It still undoubtedly holds a few ibex, red bear, and tahr are more common, but as the limitation of licences only allows a limited number of animals to be killed, the shooting will probably much improve as time goes on. It is, however, too far east for much to be expected from the preservation of ibex.

I should not think, however, that the preservation of big game in Kulu would offer any great difficulties. Red bear, of course, are safe enough if they are protected in the shooting season, owing to their habit of hibernating for at least five months, and I did not hear anything of peasants poaching tahr or ibex in the winter snows, as was undoubtedly the practice of the natives of Garhwal, and possibly still is with regard to tahr, and of the Baltis and other natives with regard to ibex. The virile Kulu peasants probably stop at trapping chikore and pheasants, and also freely take their eggs. I expect they are not

above shooting pheasants in trees on moonlight nights, supposing one of them here and there happens to be the proud possessor of a gun.

Whether this is so or not, the limiting of the number of licences to a few is a step in the right direction, but I expect that a few Government watchers, such as are employed most successfully in Kashmir, might also be an advantage.

Kulu as a headquarters, though, would not be a bad sporting centre, for if the Kulu licence become exhausted, quite close at hand, and easily reached, is the rough Bara Banghal country, in which both ibex and red bear can be obtained, and which, being a British district, although geographically in Chamba territory, can easily be arranged for from Kulu. It is a rough country with few inhabitants, and the sportsman should go well provided, and as early as possible, so as to arrive at his shooting-grounds before the invasion of the sheep.

A winter in Kulu would be great fun, I am certain, especially for those who will work hard and who like the rougher kinds of small-game shooting, such as chikore and pheasants. There are also a good number of woodcock in the main valley, which must give very pretty shooting in the great alder groves and swampy bits round the river. After the snow is down pheasant-shooting should be excellent, and no difficulty should be found in keeping one's camp larder completely supplied by the gun alone.

Beyond sporting, Kulu offers many attractions for the lover either of mountaineering or of fine scenery, both Alpine and forest. The mountaineering would be of the less ambitious kind. There are no giant

peaks to be laid siege to, but there are innumerable mountains which offer every kind of mountain problem, and, besides, are quite large enough and difficult enough to try the strongest and most skilful leader.

The conditions are Alpine, not typical Himalayan, and so, to a certain extent, is the scale, as one sleeps higher than one would in the Alps.

Great elevation must tell, and difficult problems and great exertion will also count for more at nineteen or at twenty thousand feet than at fourteen or fifteen thousand feet. And it must always be remembered and taken into consideration that there is generally about that difference in elevation or fall work, and it is sure to tell a little, no matter how fit a man is.

In climbing circles, especially amongst men who have worked much in the Himalaya or other great altitudes, the question of an early start is much debated. I am certain that when one has to sleep very high it is a mistake. A man's vitality is low, and consequently resistance to cold is much less than at lower altitudes. The temperatures, too, are also low—as low as the temperatures met with at high Alpine gîtes, or lower. Therefore, for very high expeditions, unless it cannot possibly be avoided, I should advocate not starting before 5 a.m.

With us, however, the conditions were different. Except at our Soft Stone camp, we seldom slept above sixteen thousand feet, and luckily did not experience any very low temperatures. We were always, too, in country to which we could take native porters, and so had a sufficiency of bedding and warm food—a very great advantage. Not only was this the case, but in

the early part of the year especially, the weather was so bad and the condition of the snow so uncertain, that our only chance was to be off soon after midnight. Nor, as far as I know, did we suffer for it in any way; rather the reverse, for the nights were usually fine and frosty, while the weather by about eleven o'clock in the day broke up, and snow, sleet, and wind were experienced up aloft, and rain below in the valleys.

There is one great difficulty in a mixed shooting and climbing trip, and that is that one cannot work alone on mountains, and that at least one member of the party must have had a good experience of snow and ice conditions. By which I do not mean that he has trudged over passes when the snow has been crisp, or crossed avalanche tracks or winter snow-beds when out shooting, but he must have a real knowledge of the conditions of snow-slopes after different weathers, and the method of dealing with them. He must also be a good ice-man and a rapid step-cutter. There are plenty of men in the Himalaya who would be excellent when once taught, and practised, but however active a man may be, and however good a cragsman, he has got to learn snow and ice work, like everything else. In fact, a man who is a first-class hillman, and firm on his feet, is often a danger in himself (though he would be safe and excellent on the most difficult tahr ground), from his very confidence and his certainty that he knows all about what is really quite new to him. Nevertheless, it is from this class of man, when he has learnt, that the first-class mountaineer is derived, always supposing that besides his activity he has intelligence.

Again, the practice of climbing only two on a rope is one which is very frequently disapproved of. No doubt for crossing much crevassed glacier or névé slopes it is safer to have a longer rope, and perhaps three or four men, but for the average climbs that we did I cannot see that the safety of the party would have been increased by always insisting on a minimum of three.

Of course in case of accident two men can help a third much more easily—and small accidents may often occur, such as sprains, or a stone on the hand, and such-like—but, if the climb is suitable, two men are often safer than with a third. For instance, they can move much quicker, as was required when Captain Todd climbed his giant. Pace was a necessity on that day. With such a capable, and withal cautious guide as Heinrich Führer I am sure that we ran no undue risk by the party so frequently being composed of only two members. At any rate, all's well that ends well, and on a mountain nothing resembling an accident or risk of any kind occurred, my misfortune being, as I have pointed out, entirely due to personal attentions paid to me by the Kulu god Jamlu.

Much more remains to be done in Kulu and its surroundings. There are many more valleys and passes to be explored and crossed, and I hope some day I may again have the chance of completing my knowledge of this fascinating part of the world, and also of travelling in the equally grand districts of Bashahr and Spiti, which present much the same contrasts in scenery as one finds between Kulu and Lahoul, but I believe even finer.

What masses of the Himalaya yet remain to be seen! And though I have now arrived at the end of this narrative, I trust I am not yet at the end of my wanderings in the many—to me—quite new districts of this great mountain world. And even my farewell to Kulu and Lahoul is only, I hope, *au revoir*.





Lahoul Peaks.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME HISTORY AND FOLK-LORE

BY CAPTAIN TODD

GEOGRAPHY makes history all the world over, and nowhere is this more palpably true than in the Himalaya.

Kulu history is based on evidences which are meagre, and, more especially in the instance of the so-called 'chronicle' of the Rajah of Kulu, often unreliable. But from the legends of an untutored mountain race and the record inscribed on the face of the slowly changing ranges, it is sometimes possible to reconstitute something of a picture of what life was like before the advent of the British.

The position of the valley, it has always seemed to me, is peculiar. Here is no back-water like the neighbouring state of Chamba, in which an ancient Rajput line has been sheltered by its mountain barriers, and thus enabled to maintain an unbroken rule from a period preceding the dawn of civilization in Europe. Kulu and Lahoul lie full in a channel through which has ebbed and flowed for ages the tides of racial and religious antagonisms. The people have acknowledged many masters—Aryan and Mongolian. But through it all Indian markets have always demanded salt, and wool, and borax, to say nothing of

the more precious merchandise of Central Asia. And while armies marched and fought, the hungry Tibetans would still risk much to get the wheat of the plains and the incomparable barley of Lahoul. The trade, therefore, went on. It was quite by chance that I discovered the ancient trade route.

One must remember that the Beas was nowhere bridged, and nearly everywhere an impassable torrent; that there were no mule roads, so that all trade must be packed on sheep; that every height was crowned with a garrison of marauders; that the Kulu farmer then, as now, regarded travelling sheep as 'fair game'; that there was a customs barrier for the Rahtang Pass below Rahla at the cañon still known as the 'customs house,' where, no doubt, a foreigner's life was made a burden to him, and that there would be endless bickering and bargaining at every halt before a caravan of laden sheep could get any grazing. All this is plain to anyone who can imagine the Kulu people set free from the restraint which the British Raj imposes.

So the trade avoided the Hamta Pass, and the Rahtang, and the comparatively broad paths which led to destruction in the valley. Arrived at the summit of the Baralacha Pass, the Tibetans turned sharp to the left and followed down the left bank of the Chandra River.

Here was pasturage and to spare of the finest fattening grass in the world wherever they chose to halt. There were no torrents which were not easily fordable in the morning, and there was little fear of molestation in an uninhabited and, to the Indian mind, most undesirable region.

Past the beautiful Chandra Lake the trade sheep marched and grazed the plain near 'split rock,' still known as the Plain of the Kanauris. There the middle-men from Kanaur in Bashahr, and perhaps from Kothi Kanaur, at the head of the Parvattiya Glen, met them.

The big fifty-pound packs of salt and other merchandise were unpacked. The big Tibetan sheep were shorn. For a week the trading went on, and finally the little Bashahr sheep moved off, laden, but not so heavily as the Tibetan 'biangis,' or trade sheep, while the latter returned with new packs to Rudok and Leh.

But the Kanauris had no thought of moving through Kulu. They went up the valley which is now blocked by the Shigri Glacier, across the head of the Parvattiya Valley, along the old mountain sheep-track, which is still known though seldom used, always through uninhabited safety, to the Sutlej Valley at Rampur.

There they met, and, let us hope, were a match for the wily trader of the plains.

There are three invasions of Kulu recorded in the chronicles of Ladakh. The first was somewhere between A.D. 1125 and 1150. At this time Kulu was probably part of the kingdom of Ladakh, and the 'ruler,' who was made to pay a tribute of half-bred yaks and iron to the King of Ladakh, was quite possibly a Tibetan. Secondly, in 1440-70, a 'Kashmiri Buddhist' army took the town of Kaluta.

The third invasion was somewhere between 1530 and 1560, shortly after Sidh Singh Badaffi had himself declared Rajah at Nast (Juggat Sukh). Tradi-

tion points fairly clearly to a definite acceptance by Tibetans of, at any rate, the higher positions of Kulu proper, and this is corroborated in several ways.

An interesting incident occurred during the time of Thakur Hari Chand of Lahoul.

Some time within the last twenty years a monk came down with credentials from Lhassa addressed to the Thakur. He had in his pocket an ancient map of Manali and of an old Tibetan monastery which once stood there. The monks had been driven out of the valley in a hurry, but had hidden their library in a cave, which they had closed in, hiding the mouth with a pile of deodar logs, and sealing it for ever with a horrid curse to scare even the boldest Kulu man from interfering with the logs. The monk and his plans reached Manali. He went straight to the pile of logs in front of the temple, and was at once confronted with a curse more secure than any Chubb lock!

Most unfortunately Thakur Hari Chand made no notes, and did not communicate with the Assistant-Commissioner, who would no doubt have explained that credentials from Lhassa annulled the curse, and acted accordingly. The mystery remains unsolved, but the incident shows that monastic chronicles confirm the general tradition of a Tibetan occupation, and perhaps some day Lhassa will make another attempt.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century certain forts above the Kulu Valley were undoubtedly held by Tibetan officers. The most unpopular of these was the Pitti Thakur, the remains of whose fort are plainly traceable on a spur above Juggat Sukh. His place

of worship was the Prini Temple of the great god Jamlu, at the foot of the approach to the Hamta. In the precincts of this temple to this day, alone of all the temples in Kulu, the Spiti men go to make offerings. All their race must take their shoes off in the temple precincts, but Lamaists go in fully shod, and, when he is inspired, the local prophet at the shrine speaks a language which he claims, and a not hypercritical congregation allow, to be Tibetan. He always maintains that the god came from Bhutan (Tibet) or Chin (China).

Incidentally this is an interesting commentary on the partially Tibetan origin of the Malana people, the disciples and incarnations of Jamlu. They certainly represent one of the advanced posts of Tibetan influence, flanking the ancient trade route, and even by tradition protecting a minor trade route from the Malana Glen to the Chandra Valley. Possibly the glacier at the head of the glen was once less formidable than it is now.

But to return to Pitti Thakur. He may have been devout, but unless he is hideously maligned he was a ruffian, for he preferred human milk to any other kind of drink, and used to perform human sacrifices.

Personally I doubt the story. He belonged to a race constitutionally averse to teetotalism, and his 'sacrifices' were probably well-merited executions. He had lieutenants, of evil memory, in several forts.

In fact, the Tibetans held the left bank of the Beas with the approaches to the Hamta and Chandrakani Passes, and all the by-paths by which these would have been turned. But above Juggat Sukh the

Rajput Jinna Rana held both banks of the Beas, which is here generally easy to cross.

It is clear that service in these outlying forts must have been very irksome to the Tibetans. They never liked coming below an altitude of ten thousand feet. In the winter they were cut off from all relief across the passes, and they were in the midst of an extremely treacherous and hostile people. But that they were, and are, a more humane and hospitable and infinitely more civilized race than the Kulu men there is no doubt.

Their 'forward' policy was no doubt a sheer necessity if they were to protect their trade. For the time, however, the tide had begun to turn. The adventurer Sidh Singh cut off their outposts in the Kulu Valley, and founded the Badani dynasty, and in spite of the fact that King Isewang Namgyal (1530-1560) of Ladakh made the chief of Kulu feel the weight of his arm on his way back from Nepal, Sidh Singh's descendants were within the next two hundred years to make themselves overlords of the Ladakhi province of Lahoul as the kingdom of Western Tibet decayed.

When Sidh Singh made himself Rajah of Nast (Juggat Sukh), about A.D. 1500, the north of the Kulu Valley was ruled by Sinna Rana. He was almost certainly a Rajput, as his story will show. His capital town was Manali. He was apparently on good terms with the Pitti Thakur, and left him to protect the approaches from the left bank of the Beas. The right bank he held with the Manali for commanding the lower road up the river, and the great fortress of Mandar Kôte on a fine spur high above Manali town in the jaws of Manali Nullah.

It is well known that Manali Fortress was once besieged by a Gaddi army and very nearly fell. It is hard to imagine the peaceful Gaddi shepherds as men of war. But perhaps the legend records an attack from Chamba or the old Bara Banghal State, and it is quite certain that a force containing Gaddis would prefer marching along the heights with their enemy below them; and the building of Mandar Kôte was doubtless to prevent the outflanking of the Manali Fort from the top of the Manali Nullah. However, there was Jinna Rana, a ruler whose mere memory is loved by the Manali people to this day. All was well until the appearance of Sidh Singh Badani, and the expulsion of the Tibetans. The 'Badani' evidently could not endure a rival in Manali, and he proceeded to plot against him. The legend of the plot is told in great detail, and the details vary, but the pith of it is as follows:

'The Rana had a Dagi groom of low caste, called "Whiskers," who had grown a beard nine hands long. To this beard the Rana objected. He said that Dagis had no right to grow beards like this. But the groom refused to shave it, saying that servants should only shave when their masters died. Now Muchiani (Whiskers) was a particularly good bowman. The beard question became acute, and one day, in the course of an argument, the Rana pointed to a mynah sitting on the back of a cow. "Kill that mynah and your beard remains. Miss it, and I shave you. Wound the cow, and I shave you first and kill you afterwards."

'The mynah was killed. The beard remained. And that was an end of all good feeling between the

Rana and his groom. Both sides had been severely provoked.

'Here was an instrument to Sidh Singh's hand. He sent for Muchiani and bribed him to kill the Rana. The Rana went out one day to look at his rice-fields—still, after four hundred years, known as the Kumani and Rambar fields—below Bashist. As he was riding back, Muchiani shot him. A stone pillar marks the place where the arrow pierced his thigh. Everyone knows the exact spot on which Muchiani stood to take aim. The range is a good three hundred yards.

'The Rana rode off to Mandar Kôte with the arrow in his thigh. Apparently he was a humble-minded ruler and had no escort, except his groom. At the spring of Baira Kuta he stopped to drink water, and there he died.

'Meanwhile the ladies were all in Mandar Kôte Fort. They heard a horse gallop up to the stable, but there was no Rana with him. Just then they heard the noise of drumming. This was Muchiani coming up to the fort, and drumming a dirge on a winnowing sieve, to announce the death of his master.

'Drumming is a great art in the hills, and it is always easy to distinguish the beat for a death from that of a marriage or a battle-drum. At once the Rani, like a true Rajputani, set fire to the fort, and she and all her ladies were burnt, including the Muchiani's wife.

'Sidh Singh rewarded the Muchiani with the very rice-fields where the crime took place, and he founded a flourishing but extremely unpopular family, to this day known as the "Whiskers."

'The Rani, after her sati, turned into a fairy, with a shrine in the Mandar Kôte ruins.'

It is always the principle in Manali when your favourite divinity fails to send timely rain to annoy him, or her, until the rain comes. The Rani is in charge of the weather to this day, and when rain is needed and negligence is considered proved, some Muchianis are sent up with a cow-skin, which they burn near the shrine. This never fails to produce rain, for what Rajput lady could endure either the smell of burnt hide or the proximity of her lord's murderer?

As for the Muchianis, they were 'cast of religion,' and even now no village god will have one of them anywhere near him.

But with the new state behind them the Muchianis could afford to laugh at the Church. No sooner was the Rani declared to be a fairy than they announced that the murderer's wife, who had perished with her, was a fairy also. They built a beautiful little temple in her honour in the glen above. It is, as far as I know, the only family chapel in Kulu.

The Descendants of Sinna Rana.

Two miles below Manali Rest-house, on the bank above the Hamta River, is the little hamlet of Aleo, fronting on to a pretty village green. All round the edge of the green stand a number of upright stones. I inquired one day what these meant, and was told that they were memorial stones for the dead.

Now, the only families in the hills known to me to erect stones to the memory of their dead were the

royal families of Suket and Mand, and at one time similar stones were put up to the memory of Kulu Rajahs at Naggar, where they still remain. We found that the Aleo stones were erected by one family only, the Nuwanis. They were able to satisfy me as to their royal descent, and this is the story as they told it:

'When Sinna Rana was murdered and his ladies decided to commit sati, one of them was about to bear him a child. So the Rani sent her out of the fort before they fired it, and in due course a son was born in her father's house.

'This child was herding cattle on the Gaddis' plain at Manali—the place where the Gaddi army had encamped during the siege of Manali—when Raja Sidh Singh came up to sacrifice a buffalo to the goddess Hirma at Dungri Temple. The buffalo escaped, wounded and infuriated, and was pursued by the Rajah's men. But as he ran the little boy either shot him or caught him by the horns.

'The Rajah sent for him and found that he was Sinna Rana's son. "He must be given a place," said the Rajah. "Let it be a place with the river in front and a precipice behind." This, in Kulu, is an idiom for "a tight fix," and probably the Rajah was hinting that the child might be conveniently removed.

'But everyone loved Sinna Rana's memory, and none ventured to kill his son. So Aleo was found for him—a place which literally answered to the Rajah's order—and the latter either relented or was afraid to kill him, and so there the boy grew up and founded the Nuwani family. They have never forgotten their descent, and though they have no status beyond that

of ordinary farmers, they have for four hundred years assumed the royal prerogative to erect memorial stones, and have always nursed their hatred of the Badani Rajahs. Even now, when the head of the Badani house dies, they assemble, secretly kill a goat, and hold a great feast. In addition to this, the Badani family are always, in the north of the valley, remembered as the usurpers who had murdered the chief four hundred years ago. It is said that the Rana's archives are still held in a trust so sacred that the priest who handles them must first blindfold himself.'

South of Manali, and bounded by the Siunsa Nullah on the north, and by Bajaura on the south, there was at one time a small state on the right bank of the Beas ruled over by a Rana. The capital city was immediately opposite Naggar, and the Rana lived in the fortified palace of Gada Dheg. His main defence was the huge dressed stone fort of Baragarh. The last of this dynasty, which is said to have come to an end in the thirteenth century, married a princess of Suket. She bore the Rajah, Bhosal Rana, a son and daughter. The memories of this Rajah are not nearly so vivid as those of the Rana of Manali, but it is always believed that the Badani Rajahs used the stones of the ruins of the palace of Gada Dheg to build both the castle and the temple at Naggar. The legend of the fall of Bhosal Rana is like a story I have heard in Chamba, and another yet in Chamba-Lahoul, and I fear there is no doubt that the old Rajput chiefs sought at times to improve their water-supply by burying their wives alive. This is how the story was told to me:

'Bhosal Rana was a fool. His Wazir was a Brahman, who fell in love with the Rani. But she would have none of him. Therefore he told the Rana that the big watercourse which waters the rice of Baragarh would never run properly unless the Rani were buried alive beside it. So the Rana gave the order. Now the mason who was to make the tomb was named Kalu, and he was foster-brother to the Rani, and she pleaded with him. So he made the tomb so large that she could move about in it, and even sit down in it. She was entombed in a standing position. At night the Wazir came to see his work. He found the Rani alive, and tried to catch her by the hair, but she eluded him, and crouched out of his way. So he threw great stones upon her, and she died.

'When the Wazir came to the palace the children asked him, "Where is our mother?" and he said: "Ask Kalu the mason." When they asked the mason he bade them "Go look at the horses in the stable, take horses, and tell her father in Suket." So they came to Suket, and the heir threw his turban before his uncle. Then Rup Chand came with an army. He flayed the Wazir alive, and then sprinkled him with pepper, and cut him into small pieces, and these were smeared upon the leaves of the trees. The Rana he could not kill, but he dressed him in a kilt woven from hemp, and had him pelted with cow-dung all the way to his boundary. His children were taken to Suket, and the Baragarh State was ruled from Suket, until it was taken by one of the Badani Rajahs in the seventeenth century.

'The whole garrison of Baragarh Fort went off to a fair in the middle of May, and one of their women

waved a red petticoat to signal the Rajah in Naggar that the fort was empty, so he took the fort, and killed only the woman who had betrayed it, and her he threw over the rock on which the fort stands.'

The Badani Rajahs, though they kept their State from A.D. 1500 to the middle of the nineteenth century, left no records beyond the 'copy' of an old chronicle, of which the original, if it ever existed, was quite certainly not historical. Its inaccuracy is proved by internal evidence, and by comparison with the chronicles of neighbouring States.

The history of the dynasty as handed down is a sufficiently bald story, but, again, tradition steps in, and throws a little light on what life was really like under the Badanis. Several learned archæologists have deplored the lack of written chronicles in Kulu. All Kulu knows the reason.

The last of the Rajahs, Jit Singh (1807-48), had two chamberlains called Hukmu and Gohn, both belonging to the 'Bhumhan' family. They were keepers of the archives. They fell under the suspicion of the Rajah, and were summoned to Naggar from their home in Rupi. The Rajah told them that he had a mind to kill them.

'Slay us if you will, Sarkar, but we have left word that if we die our wives are to burn the State papers.'

This was going too far. The Rajah was perfectly furious, and, with characteristic ineptitude, he beheaded both the chamberlains then and there. Then he went off to secure the State papers, but the news had already preceded him and his messengers, and they were met by two indignant wives and a heap of smouldering ruins.

In the fire were lost, not only the chronicles of the Badani family, but all the formulæ for their secret method of extracting silver from ore. Thus the Rupi silver mines were closed down, and though, when the Sikhs came to Kulu, General Ventura sent men to Lahore and elsewhere, who brought back instructions of sorts, the new methods never paid as the old ones had done, and so the chamberlains were avenged.

This sounds like the record of an irresponsible tyranny, but it must not be thought that the hillmen were a downtrodden race. The Hill State was, in its way, a democratic institution; and though the sacred person of the chief was, and is, religiously respected, so long as he faces the people, and though his ministers were given very great latitude in the matter of 'pickings,' there was a point beyond which they could not go. At this point the responsibility of ministers was enforced in a manner which would appeal to many a British voter.

When the Government became really unbearable, it was, and is, the custom for the aggrieved subjects to concentrate, occupy the capital, and place all the Rajah's advisers in chains, pending inquiry. The 'Cabinet' and the 'Household,' and their underlings, still fettered, did hard labour, and in the end a new and, for the time being, chastened ministry was generally appointed. Bloodshed was not very common and the outgoing advisers were usually set free when they had disgorged some of their ill-gotten gains.

This democratic custom was called a 'Dum,' and was a kind of referendum by which the hill people really showed their mind.

The following account, given by Mr. Howell of the

most celebrated 'Dum,' is of great interest. He relates as follows:

'"Jit Singh, Rajah" (1807-43) succeeded as a baby. His guardian and guide was Tulsu, the "Negi" or commandant of a fort or territorial unit, who lived at Baran, near Katrian. The Rajah loved and trusted him, and leaned upon him more and more, and, thanks to Tulsu, he was in the end the slave of his ministers and officers.

'Now Solhu Ram was Wazir of Kulu, and Kapuni was Wazir of Saraj, and Kapuni hated Tulsu, and he knew this. So Tulsu sent for Kapuni to come and have audience at Sultanpur. He came, and pitched his camp where the Kulu Tehsil now stands, about half a mile from the palace. In the morning he was to have his audience, and by custom he would receive a salute of eight guns. Now the Wazir of Kulu had arranged with Tulsu Negi that one of the saluting guns should be loaded and fired at the Wazir Kapuni. But he heard of their plan, so he dressed his body-servant in his own robes and jewels, and set him in his "palki," and sent him off as though he were the Wazir come to his audience. As the servant arrived at the porch of the palace, the salute was fired, and the servant was shot, and died.

'So Kapuni the Wazir fled into his own Waziri, and called the Sarajis together for a "Dum." They assembled, and all came together to the fair ground of Bhalpur, a suburb of Sultanpur, and pitched their camp. First they came and saluted the Rajah with the royal salutation, and then they said: "Sarkar, deliver Tulsu Negi to us, and let him be cast out of Kulu." The Rajah answered: "I will deliver him,

for he was a weakling." But to Tulsu he only said: "Leave the palace and go home, and I will make your son Negi in your place." Tulsu answered, "Maharaj," as though he would go. But he well knew that if he left the palace he would fall into the hands of the Sarajis, so he went to his room and fetched an axe, and said to the Rajah: "Sarkar, slay me with this axe, but do not cast me out of the palace." The Rajah said: "Stay then, Negi, it is well."

'Next day the Sarajis came and hailed the Rajah, saying: "Maharaj, what of our prayers?" Whereupon the Rajah answered: "Tulsu Negi I love as the bowels of my heart." Then the "Dum" returned to their camp to hold counsel. Tulsu meanwhile sent word to his wife and said: "Fly to Prini, and there take sanctuary in the temple of Jamlu."

'Next day the "Dum" marched past the palace to Baran, and came to Tulsu Negi's house. They seized his sheep and cattle and money, and all his possessions, and took them down to the island opposite Sultanpur Bazaar, and threw the sheep and cattle into the river.

'Others of them went to Prini and caught Tulsu's women, dragged them from their sanctuary in Jamlu's Temple, pelted them, and made them do hard labour for them, but did not kill them.

'So the Rajah and the Negi fled away to Kotha Dar, a fort in Lower Saraj, and the Dum set up his younger brother as Rajah.

'But the Rajah of Mandi came with an army and succoured Jit Singh, and broke up the Dum. Kapuni fled, but he never made his peace with Jit Singh, and Kapuni it was who brought in the Sikhs to Kulu.'

That was the story as told to me by an old man whose father knew Tulsu Negi. It is a typical piece of hill politics, and it is easy to reconstruct all the scenes. A vast amount of whistling and drumming—well-doubled drums and plenty of whistling on the fingers—put an immense amount of Dutch courage into a hill mob, which, like Haji Baba's Persians, loves fighting as long as there is no killing—accompanied with shouting and intrigue, tempers all rather highly strung, the two sides absolutely dominated by the two Negis, and no great harm done to anybody!

Tulsu's ill-gotten gains, and much of the Rajah's treasure, was buried in a landslip which overwhelmed his house. As usual, there is a modern sequel. The curse of Jamlu lay on Saraj on account of his violated sanctuary. Crops failed, cattle died, and babies faded away. Finally, some time in the eighties, it was decided that the god of the Sarajis, Sikisni, must make amends to Jamlu.

All the Sarajis regard the chief of Shangri as the rightful head of the Badani family, so he went with a cow for the god (who has no image), and all the children of the Dum, and a crowd of prophets and disciples and priests, to make submission to Jamlu.

They made little dolls of grass and birch bark, with false pigtails, to represent their ancestors, and tied them together, and chopped them into pieces before the god Jamlu. Thus Jamlu was appeased, and the curse was stayed—at least, the Sarajis think so, which is all that matters.

Here is another Kulu legend, which satisfies them in solving the reason for cloven hoofs in their cattle,

and is quite amusing. It was all due to the escape to the heavens of a magic cow. Her flight from the haunts of man to safer climes was the result of curiosity on the part of a man (for a wonder). But he was a demon king, which perhaps accounted for his weakness. At all events, he was intent on seeing this marvellous cow which gave unlimited milk. His brother-in-law, also a king in mythological times, was equally determined that this brother-in-law of his wife's should not intrude into the sacred animal's stall. However, the demon king forced his way into the stable, whereupon the cow is said to have made her escape through the roof of her stable, and, flying aloft, now queens it as a constellation in the sky. The demon was so furious with the animal for showing nothing of herself but two pairs of clean heels, that he drew a bow at a venture, and his arrow clove her hoof as she disappeared. His rage did not stop here, though, as he then turned upon his brother-in-law and slew him. Vengeance came in the person of the murdered king's son, who cut off all but four of the superabundant supply of arms which his uncle possessed, and this is why the demon king, Sahasabapu, was afterwards known as the snake king. The trouble did not, unfortunately, stop here, for on being restored to life by the son who had also avenged his death, the ungrateful king commanded Paras Ram to behead his mother, on the ground that she was the cause of the whole affair, for it was through her invitation to his sister's husband that the irreparable loss of the cow of which he had been so justly proud was brought about.

With the usual finale of fairy stories, all ends well,

however, and the badly treated son, having distinguished himself in the wars, is told by his father to name his reward. With promptness Paras Ram demands that his mother shall be restored to life, and gains his desire. He must have been a good youth at heart, as he proceeds to wipe out even the remembrance of matricide by settling landed property on the local priests, and these villages are quoted as a proof of the truth of the legend.

The Kulu people are probably neither more nor less remarkable than other country folk, but they are very fond of giving chapter and verse for happenings, changes, or names. This is their explanation of a change of dynasty in bygone times, when the Rajahs took Singh as part of their signatures. It was all due to the commemorating of a valiant Rajah, Sudh Pal. When abroad one day he came upon a cow just as it was attacked by a leopard. With one blow of his fist he killed the leopard, and rescued the sacred beast. As the name Singh is the name for a lion, so the name of the Rajahs for ever after became Singh also, say the people.

CHAPTER XIV

A LADY'S POINT OF VIEW

By the Hon. Mrs. C. G. BRUCE

Although the glories, whether of sight or action, which reward the mountaineer are denied to those whose powers are limited, there still falls to the share of 'mere woman' a very delightful and varied store of experience as one Himalayan expedition after another is strung on to the chain of memory.

I can testify to one fact, and that is that one can never grow tired of them. How, indeed, could one weary of such sights as are afforded in the broad mass of magnificent scenery by mountains, rivers, and forests; of such picturesque scenes as are furnished by the closer detail of village, woodland glade, and wild flowers; by the contrasting of one country with another; by the noting of differences between people, religions, and customs?

All these interests are spread out before one as the travelling carpet unrolls, the only fence to the prospect being time and money. Given these two important factors, and, of course, good health, what might not one do and see in this wonderful Himalayan world?

I do, however, most gratefully accept the limited supply of both which has fallen to my lot, and trust that the fact of my gratitude may coax kind Fortune

into yet further increasing my opportunities of visiting the mountains which form so grand a frontispiece to the book of India.

Certainly travel whets the appetite, and, having tasted the pleasure of crossing such passes as the Zoji Là, the Umba Là, and the Margan—gates out of Kashmir into Ladakh—the temptation to try two others—the Babboo and the Rahtang—which should usher us into Kulu and Lahoul, helped me to turn my back on the glories of my garden, with its waving golden daffodils and apricot-tinted roses, such as early April in the North-West Frontier station of Abbottabad bestows on us.

The Kangra Valley I had often visited, but to travel through its length in April was a new pleasure.

Leaving the hot and dusty little railway-station of Pathan Kôte, we took leave without a single pang of trains and time-tables, and cheerfully put up with the tonga drive of sixty odd miles for the sake of the new country beckoning us beyond.

As we neared Dharmsala, the plain below became veiled in blue distance, a softening background to the vivid green of spring crops and foliage around us. The rhododendrons which we had seen in previous years had passed their zenith a month earlier. In March they mass in ruby and rose against the sober grey of the ilex forests on the Kangra Hills, but we were still to find them in bloom at the higher altitude of the Babboo Pass, which is the dividing wall between the Kangra and Kulu Valleys.

A week was delightfully spent at Dharmsala with old friends, and then, hearing of the arrival of bag and baggage at our starting-point, Palampur, we set

out one afternoon on our ponies—a good advertisement for 'Black and White.' My own white pony is an old friend of thirteen years. He must by now be about twenty. Among other names, he owns the highly respectable one of 'Watson.'

Within two days of our leaving Palampur, he most unfortunately got a bad rub through the careless saddling of a syce, and this prevented my riding him for two months. As yet I had not achieved the capital one-pole hammock 'dandy,' in which later on I was carried when tired, so I walked a good deal more than a weak ankle at first approved of. There is, however, no better form of massage for weak ankles than walking in the hills. The up-and-down movements in which my feet were to be exercised during the next few months quite restored the ligaments and muscles, and before long I could walk ten miles and more at a stretch.

In all 'marches,' as we colloquially term our daily journeys on foot or horseback, hill or plain, in India, there is bound to be a good deal of sameness. One has the early start every morning, then several hours of road-work, very often dull and tedious work too. There is the daily and literal taking up of one's bed (luckily carried for one), the daily unpacking and repacking.

Each day, it is true, sees one at a different board, sleeping on a different bed—often very indifferent beds and boards, it must be confessed—still, the same procedure is followed, and an exact diary would be as tedious for the reader as for the writer.

But there are constant unexpected compensations on nearly every march, and these are often in the form

of flowers, for which my eyes are ever on the alert. This expedition was not quite so rich in such treasure-trove as others we have had, but one flower never failed us the whole time. We followed the quest of the rose from early April, when we left our own garden one mass of Banksias and 'Fortune's yellow,' up to late October, when we gathered the autumn rose hips in bright coral bunches on the marches back to Simla. From April onward it was roses, roses, all the way, from Abbottabad to far Lahoul. They varied, of course, from the petted garden ones with all in their favour to the tough, prickly bushes covered with bloom, which battled for existence in bare, rocky corners where one would swear no rose could grow.

It is the kindest of wild Indian flowers, and one of the most bare and arid spots one could find on the Frontier—the stony Samana—is redeemed by roses; and the hill fort and district beyond the historic Saragahri, is called Gulistan, or Garden of Roses. The word 'garden' is an exaggeration, but I used to rejoice in the roses on my rough walks. I have often had to leave my cherished garden roses when at their best, but must say I have nearly always found wild ones as beautiful in their way to console me.

As we rode through the pretty Kangra villages and lanes, and farther on into Kulu, the creamy, richly scented 'Multiflora,' with its great trusses of flowers, foamed in odorous masses over rocks, shrubs, and even over quite tall trees, veiling some of them with a snowy sheet. Beside them blushed the shell-pink euphrosyne, with its double blossoms and thick centre of golden stamens. The pale dog-rose, too, was as

plentiful as in our home hedges, and its elusive scent reminded one of an English June. Then the hardy, prickly bushes, covered with roses of every shade, from crimson to pale pink, were close of kin to Scotch briars.

The rose might well be the badge of the Himalaya, for even at great heights we found the close-growing rock rose of Alpine fame.

During the march from Baijnath to Dhelu, which we found too broad of road and dull in character to please us altogether, I came upon a very unexpected sight and a very beautiful one. The hillsides here were of a tameness which made it all the more surprising and welcome to round a corner and behold a veritable cascade of bauhinia-trees in full bloom. The delicate lilac of the flowers was untouched with the green of leaves; for, as in the almond, they appear later, and so nothing hid the blossoms. One could trace the meandering stream by the curves in which the trees grew, and the effect was almost Japanese in character.

We were the first people to cross the Babboo Pass, for, with the exception of 'first-leave' officers bent on sport, no travellers would be likely to go to Kulu by that route so early in the year. Some hill-men we met on the road gave such alarming reports of the pass that, had we not been old wayfarers, we might have been frightened off our plans, and have taken the easier but far less interesting, and also hotter, road over the Dulchi Pass. We smiled at these travellers' tales, therefore—at least, the more experienced of us did—and so I smiled too, and continued the way we had started on that very wet morning. It soon

cleared, and we had a delightful march, for spring was in the air. The foliage was a joy to behold.

The scarlet of the young maples and sycamores, with the bronze of uncurling chestnut buds and the golden leaves which fringed the last year's silver-green of the ilex-trees, made a brilliant effect. New needles edged all the firs, which looked as if a fresh coat of varnish had just been given them. A host of delicate leafage covered shrubs and enriched undergrowth, and the ubiquitous rose gleamed on tree and hedge, while the narrow terraces of tender wheat and fresh spring grass painted all the steep hillsides with vivid emerald. To all these evidences of advanced spring was added the purling and plashing of the mountain springs as they rippled and gurgled and danced over rocks and stones, as if delighting in their escape from the stern grasp of the snowy pass above to the welcoming arms of the smiling valley below.

The rough stone staircases which are characteristic of both Kangra and Kulu hill roads, and which form short cuts, made the ascent fairly easy, although it was steep and long, besides being rather hot. But we soon emerged on to the top of the pass—a very narrow neck—which was hard-bound in old winter snow. After some clearing and cutting with ice-axes by my husband and the Gurkhas, we were able to zigzag down the other side.

It was quite exciting to realize that we were now in Kulu, and we soon found the road perfectly easy. So much for our alarmists. The path wound down through a veritable battlefield of forest trees. Great giants lay hurled about, their roots measuring many feet across. Some trees lay athwart gaunt grey trunks

of dead but still standing brothers in affliction. Branches and boughs, wrenched off in the rage of winter's blast and fury, lay tossed about, and the general atmosphere was the stillness of death. No doubt by-and-by some might creep back to life under Spring's tender care, but as yet she was too busy in the valleys, and had not climbed so high.

A little lower we found her handiwork, and stepped once more into life and colour.

The chestnuts and walnuts were magnificent, and the sunshine in golden shafts lit up their bright foliage. They suggested the gaily bedecked and bejewelled ladies of the forest court sallying forth to meet their liege lords, unconscious of the sad strewn field of destruction above.

But small clouds which had been gathering unobserved now burst in one of the sudden storms of April, and stinging hailstones soon put all thoughts save those of shelter out of our heads. We ran down the hill-path, and soon struck the turn at the bottom which led past a rough wooden aqueduct, and reached the first little rest-house in Kulu. A rainbow was throwing a triumphant arch of welcome across the river, for the sky had cleared again, and the evening sun lit up two distant peaks of snowy whiteness with a dome of rose and gold, and beckoned the mountaineer most tantalizingly. Altogether we were more than satisfied with our first introduction to the valley, and full of the delights of anticipation.

Putting scenery aside, the contrast between the Kulu and Kangra Valleys is very remarkable. For one thing, absurd as it may seem, the sun strikes one with less power, and its rays seem to have lost the

sting they inflict on one in the valley we had just left. This is accounted for by the proximity of Kangra to the plains.

The people, too, are different. The Gaddis of Kangra, in their short kilts and with their bearded faces, are quite distinct from the Kulu folk we were to pass next day hurrying to the big fair at Sultanpur. The women wore their best, smart checked gowns, which owed their neat fit to skilfully adjusted brass pins rather than to cut or make. Their ornaments of silver and rough enamel were loaded on their heads, ears, necks, and arms. The men, to make up for their more sober attire, had adorned their caps, which, however, already had the corners turned up with various bright colours, with wild-flowers strung together into the gayest of chains, tassels, and rosettes. The distant beating of drums and blowing of weird trumpets and conch shells came from several quarters, and gave us a cheering impression of a general holiday in which we were joining. The walk was charming to the heart of Kulu, where we intended spending a day and night, and we arrived at the bangalow with bevies of local gods, who were all converging on to the wide, park-like common which spread a green carpet for the fair in front of the bangalow. It was quite amusing wandering round afterwards, as more and more people streamed on to the ground, but there was no fair as we understood the word, to be seen. A bank holiday was nearer the mark, with refreshments—chiefly liquid—*ad lib.*

The forest trees of the Himalaya are among their most attractive features. Of course, all along the high belts of forest the trees are of much the same

species. The hardiest of all are the birches; then come different conifers, then walnuts and chestnuts. But at the lower levels, shading the valleys and rivers, a certain amount of favouritism prevails. In Kashmir, for instance, poplars and chenars and walnuts are most abundant. Kulu favours alders and deodars. I have never seen finer specimens of either kind. And not only specimen trees by any means! The alder groves and deodar forests are universal, the former shading long reaches of the rivers, the latter crowning hillsides and higher slopes of the valleys.

We got a beautiful view of the main valley from the road up from Sultanpur. But on one of the days I was waiting for my husband's return from Simla, he having left me comfortably encamped at a pretty little village called Katrain, I wandered up to find the more comprehensive outlook from Naggar on the opposite bank of the river, a good deal higher up. I climbed up a wide lane into this charming spot, well chosen as the chief European residential quarter of Kulu. The several villas dotted about the hillside gave Naggar an air of homeliness and prosperity. The ancient castle, for many centuries the royal residence of Kulu, fascinated me. The building is a fine square, three-storied pile of nut-brown stone and age-worn timbers, but it has withstood the stress of storm and earthquake, probably owing to the give-and-take properties of its skilfully-laid walls. Layers of masonry of weather-resisting stone are interspersed with solid beams of wood, and the whole effect is dignified and impregnable, for it stands on a steep eminence above the valley. Higher still, on the edge of the



Natives in Gala Dress.

deodar forest, is an old temple, and some way off are quaint carvings, relics of the old Rajahs of Kulu. The temple roof is pagoda-like, somewhat similar to the one at Manali, higher up the valley.

The courtyard at the back of the castle is very picturesque, with wooden balconies running round the second story.

The castle has its romance, too, for from one of these balconies a Kulu Rani flung herself down in consequence of the suspicion that she had a Romeo in hiding. She is said to have proved her innocence by the amazing fact that as her body touched the ground it turned into a stone figure, which, of course, one is shown as proof positive.

Altogether a fascinating spot, and one to sit and dream in, and, if one could study the local history and colour, to weave many a tale round its old walls. Photography fails where the chief charm of a subject lies, as at Naggar, in its colouring. On our second visit in the autumn to this hill capital of Kulu, the only hope of record which could do justice to the ripening masses of crimson millet and orange maize spread out on the roofs would be an artist's brush. The first glimpse of the castle is seen through the sweeping branches of a huge tree, which now shades, forsooth, an English croquet lawn; but the gay English flower-beds surrounding it and terracing the banks are an additional beauty round the old castle, and a vivid foreground to the dark forest above.

One of the contrasts between Kangra and Kulu is that the former is the garden of tea cultivation, the latter of fruit, and at Katrain I was staying for a few

days in a little orchard not very far from some of the best properties such as Mr. Donald's. I met here for the first time Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke, so well known in Kulu. They only passed through Katrain. I very soon, however, followed in their wake to Manali, one march fartner up the valley, as Katrain was growing unpleasantly hot for tents in the daytime.

A most beautiful walk brought me to Manali, where I settled my tents under the grand shelter of the finest deodar trees to be found anywhere. It was most fortunate for me being in an agreeable camp, for I had to possess my soul in what patience I might for over two weeks. Still, I knew that the journey to and from Simla was being accomplished in record time, and so I set myself to extract the best use and enjoyment possible out of climate, woods, and the most delightful country in which I could safely ramble about by myself. One walk across the fields I was specially fond of, and so was my brown dachshund, devoted companion and friend.

Crossing the bridge below my camp, after pausing to look up and down the river—the beautiful Beas—there were very few days not clear enough to let me see the snow mountains which completed the background. Near by, graceful alders shaded the boiling, rushing waters. There was a long walk both ways on the opposite bank of the river; indeed, it was the main road, though only possible for riding and walking. The path led up to a higher valley terraced in fields, and to a steep hillside above the pretty village of Aleo. From this open site the Solang Mountains rose in splendid outline against a clear blue sky.

Great crags and cliffs, and a forest of deodar, on a spur of which stood a brown wooden temple, backed the village.

Some stone memorials beyond the village were said to be the graves of scions of an old Kulu ruling house.

One of the prettiest ornaments of the architecture of the valley is the fringe of carved tassels of wood which trim the eaves of houses and temples. Each tassel is hung by a little hook, so that the faintest breeze stirs them, and in a fresh wind there is quite a musical tinkle. The houses are nearly all two-storied, and the ladies usually sit and spin in the balconies, which form good points of vantage from which to view the passers-by. Everyone seems to keep a tuft of wool up his or her coat-sleeve, and, when opportunity offers, to spin yarn out of it. I often stood and watched the hand-looms when a weaver was making one of the local blankets. They are by no means cheap for tourists to buy, costing about a pound each; still, the labour of hand-work accounts for that. The forest officer's small house stands in a pretty wood of larches, with a plantation of various trees round it. A brook flows through the wood, which might have been an English copse, with its ferns and wild strawberries—a delightful place to spend a morning with a book.

I was glad of some leisure before starting on a round of camping, as I had only been two or three weeks in India after a flying visit home, and so looked at the bright side of the next three weeks in which I should improve my walking powers, work off an accumulation of correspondence, read

and write, and explore the environs of Manali. There is nothing like writing, I think, to solace silent days. Expression, even if it is only the written word, is a relief. One cannot always be taking in without a feeling of surfeit, even when reading the best and most cheerful of books; and even if one's small ideas find their way into the wastepaper-basket more often than not, still they have accomplished their humble mission of relief.

I had also very pleasant interchange of gardening talk with Captain Banon, while Mrs. Banon took me round the plots where every English fruit and vegetable of the season were flourishing.

To speak of Kulu without mentioning General Osborne would be impossible. He was absent from his home in Naggar when I visited it, but wrote me a kind letter undertaking to see our horses reshod for us, and asking me questions about gardening in Abbottabad. He was a great rose-grower, and much loved in Kulu, as well as honoured. The pleasure I anticipated of a meeting with the General in the autumn was, alas! to be disappointed, for he died after only two days' illness in early July.

One of my favourite walks round Manali took me across the narrow valley of rice-fields, newly terraced, to the forest of fine deodars which clothed the hill opposite.

An easy slope through the woodland glades, where delicate iris and ground orchids were set in a carpet of ferns and wild-strawberry blossoms, led up to a clearing in the forest where stood the most picturesque and ancient temple called Dungri. The carvings all over and above the doors were both Hindu and

Buddhist, and the four-decker roof was quite Chinese in character. It was almost impossible to get a photograph which should take in all four roofs, but by balancing myself on a rock pinnacle I was just able to squeeze them in. Close by was a turfy level surrounded by rude stone seats in tiers, giving it the air of an alfresco stage. This is a favourite fair-ground, and a few days after I settled in Manali, in company with some fellow-visitors, I witnessed an afternoon performance, but we were glad to leave before the wine-cup had passed too freely. A great drawback to the valley people is their passion for liquor. These fairs are much too encouraging to the habit, and the two nights of the Dungri carouse gave me no rest, as many of the people rolled past my tent on their way home, to the great upsetting of my watch-dogs, and very nearly of my tent, as two or three stumbled over the ropes.

Three days later I knew I could again safely visit the lovely spot. Heavy rain had washed the ground and refreshed the trodden grass, and it was difficult to believe that these solemn, silent aisles had been invaded by revellers. Still, as a spectacle, it had been quite amusing to watch the slow dancing on the green, and the bright colour of the throng.

This time I extended my walk, and, turning to the right of the temple, I followed a path which led down a curious stone alley, called the 'Demon's Kitchen.' This gave on to an opening in the forest by which, after crossing more green terraces, one entered another grand group of deodars, and finally I descended to the banks of the Manali Stream. The water was rushing along over rocky interruptions under the

alders. The air was heavily scented by newly sawn timbers which were stacked on the bank, awaiting their long water journey, at the end of which they will be used as railway sleepers, and will exchange the thunder of the water for that of trains and traffic. After sitting on the river-side for a bit, I would turn back towards the camping-ground, and pass into a veritable Devonshire lane. Orchards and meadows, bordered by birch and lime and Spanish chestnut-trees, reminded one of home. So did a silver-toned brook and fern-trimmed grey wall, above which stood the bangalow of an English officer, who has long since retired to one of the best gardens of India, where he grows English gooseberries, and raspberries, and currants, and many choice flowers, and has trees laden with Kent-like cherries and Devonshire apples, and where, moreover, he extends a kind welcome, with the fruits of his garden, to any countryman who visits him. Captain Banon's books and magazines, too, were kindly lent to me—a real boon when one can carry but a limited supply of literature.

Every day in July and August the tiny post-office sends off hundreds of baskets of apples by post, and the postal authorities groan for any other transport, wheeled or rail, to help them.

All the hedgerows and banks in Kulu were covered from June to September with a pretty little carpet plant, the leaves like a sorrel, and the blossoms like a single, very vivid blue pea. The ferns and bracken along the river were a sight; so were the thousands of goats and sheep daily passing through, over the bridge, and along the river road which led them up towards their grazing-grounds over in Lahoul.

Another walk, usually an early morning one, was undertaken in hopes that the sulphur waters of Bashist, where they bubbled boiling out of the rock two miles beyond Manali, would benefit a rheumatic ankle which had been broken and dislocated some three years ago. And there is no doubt of the soothing effect of the waters.

The village of Bashist was too dirty for words, and the unpleasant odour of the sulphur, though harmless in itself, added no great incentive to explore the place. But I was determined to try the water, and found my way by following the pointing fingers of dirty little urchins in the streets, and of women who peered curiously at me out of their balconies, to the doorway that led into the sacred enclosure; for the people hold the hot spring in awed conviction to be the abode of a god, and to possess miraculous powers and properties.

I was told by an old hag in the small courtyard to remove my boots, which I did. Then she led me past the dark little temple, which sheltered an image carved in wood, through a narrow passage and another doorway which opened on to the tank itself. It is some twelve feet square and three feet deep. The essential waters, fresh and boiling, issued from beneath a big rock, and were received into a hewn basin, above which were carved some figures of gods. Thence they fell into the large tank, from which again there was an overflow, shut off by boarding, in which pilgrims bathed. The water in the first tank was quite clean, and so hot, even though exposed to the air, that I could with difficulty put my foot into it at first; and a chuckle of delight from a fringe of little heads

watching me from the parapet of the wall round the tank greeted the lobster hue which soon spread up to my knees, for I gave the good foot the comforting bath too.

The children were very shy, very dirty, and very pretty. A packet of moist sugar distributed among my admiring audience on the occasion of the next visit to the waters brought a smile to each grubby little mouth, and a few coppers to the old dame in charge produced a marked increase in the network of wrinkles criss-crossing her face, intended, I am sure, for a smile of gratitude.

As I laced on my boots one day one of the women watching me said how bad it must be for my feet being shut away from the air! I had not expected a health lecture from any woman in Kulu, let alone a lady of Bashist, and felt rather humbled; neither could I find a suitable reply; for it is true enough, leather footgear without ventilation is not the hygienic ideal.

The water-mills in Kulu were as fascinating as automatic toys, and I would often stand for some moments on my way to and from Bashist and watch the wooden structures and wheels which caught the water of mountain streams, and whirled and lashed it into a fury, and then, having borrowed its force and impressed it into grinding grain, let it escape, frothing and sparkling, to find its way to the river below, there to merge its identity in the great mass of water.

The days passed in peaceful rhythm until the afternoon, when, sitting beneath the shady canopy of deodar branches close to my tent, I saw a dusty way-

farer approaching. I guessed it could be no other than our guide and companion, Heinrich Führer, and accordingly introduced myself. He told me that my husband would soon arrive, and while tea was in course of preparation he gave me some description of their march from Simla. It had certainly been a stiff introduction to his climbing in the Himalaya—this forced march coming close on three weeks of enforced repose—and I could sympathize with his groans over the pace. 'You see,' he murmured apologetically, 'Major Bruce, he walks so beastly fast, and, oh, it was so beastly hot.'

Half an hour later the black horse and his rider galloped into camp, and over tea under the deodars we discussed Simla news, and made plans for the immediate future of the party.

Our first small camp up in the beautiful Solang Valley was delightful in every respect but that of weather. We were really too unfortunate in the way we were rained upon. We seemed to have a fatal fascination for every cloud, which in persistent regularity burst day by day, one after another, upon our heads, in anything but blessing.

For myself it mattered but little. I was nearly always able to get out some part of the day, but, all the same, it did matter intensely, for the disappointment to the poor climbers was mine too. It was more than irritating, and seemed such waste. It was really astonishing what an amount of successful expeditions they managed to sandwich in between the mists and storms; and, though unable to share in any of their conquests, still the whole summer through I was able to travel about with them, to get to know

each peak from a respectful distance, to make close acquaintance with several passes, and to admire them all as I developed their portraits. I was also able to partially appreciate the cost at which they had been won. The alp on which we were encamped was here and there, wherever a bubbling stream found its way, a perfect glory of marsh marigolds and purple orchises. There were masses of a rich bronze-fronded fern, very like an Osmunda, and also like the latest thing in soft, untanned leather work, growing all about the 'marg' or 'thach,' as they call these uplands in Kulu. The dwarf iris I knew well, but was no less pleased to find. Other familiar alpine flowers grew abundantly, and it was quite exciting to find that the overturned stones I came upon close to the camp were thus disturbed by bears, who roll over any big stones they think are likely to harbour ants—one of their favourite *hors-d'œuvre.* There were also large plots of wild-carrot plants, which are a tasty morsel to a bear's mind. But the wily fellows managed to avoid the sportsman. In any case, he would have had to pass the time of day only and cry 'Pax,' as he had no licence to shoot red bear.

The dogs and I had some fine snow scrambles when we speeded and welcomed back the climbing party. The snow-bridge was gradually rendered unsafe as our days in the Solang Nullah passed, chiefly by the rain; but there was snow enough and to spare stretching up the nullah, which afforded pleasant walking early in the day. The mountains all along the ridge were splendid, and offered endless work, had there only been weather to match.

One of the photographs—a case when it was the

light that failed, not the photographer—I was very sorry to lose, for it was a snapshot of a dear, handsome little Kulu shepherd boy in a kilt which had a cut and swing that would not have disgraced Princes Street, and might have been passed even by the 'robber of the North.' This small person was standing on a big rock one evening, surrounded by his flock of sheep and goats, while I was trying to convince my dachshund that he was not a sheep-dog. The little boy was not a bit perturbed at the barking dog, and plunging goats, and scared sheep, but evidently thought his charges well able to keep one small red creature at bay.

The new camera had arrived soon after we got up to this camp, and was a great interest. What a Verascope can produce is marvellous. The detail recorded on the tiny plates is so fine that the negative will bear enlarging up to twenty-six inches, and later on produced the most beautiful pictures, thanks to the Ilford Company.

No one can visit Kulu without hearing of the gods, but the Kulu religion is of so varied a godship that it is somewhat difficult to take it in at first, and to assign to each district its own presiding deity.

There is a chief god, however, who is the recognized ruler of the whole valley. The story of how he came to succeed a mortal Rajah is quite original in its way.

In 1650 the reigning King of a long line was one Juggat Singh. He apparently had cast his covetous eye on the most prized possession of one of his subjects, a merchant. Whether lands, jewels, or daughter is not recorded. A tragic end to the merchant and all he had was brought about by himself.

He set fire to his house, and perished with his family and goods sooner than let his ruler gain his desire.

The loss of what he had so greatly longed for cast the Rajah into the depths of melancholy. He professed also such horror at this holocaust, of which he justly felt himself to be the cause, that, to show his penitence, he announced that he was going to abdicate in favour of the god Ragonath-ji. The only hitch was that the god, a tiny golden image, was as far away as Delhi. With great cunning the god was abducted, however, and brought to Kulu.

Its own creation was due to another King, the great Rama, or Ragonath of Oude, who had judged it wise to leave a personal reminder of himself in his kingdom during his long absences, for he was a noted warrior. Juggat Singh was a friend of his, apparently. At all events, the Rajah could think of no better or pleasanter mode of expiating his sin than to have this passive representative. He would, he said, be the faithful subject of this new ruler, and would only hold the royal lands in his name, and administer his revenue. But as there was no one to approach Juggat Singh in the matter of power, the arrangement was highly satisfactory to himself, and upset nobody else. To this day the royal lands are held in the name of the god Ragonath-ji, and his claims are recognized even by the powers that be—that is to say, they are called Ragonath's lands.

The many festivals which are characteristic of Kulu are to do honour to this tiny golden figure. The sacrifices offered to him are of the fruits of the earth, but the priestly ritual, as it exists to-day, promises to grow more and more scanty in reverence and in the

amount of time allotted to it. Is this to be wondered at? Is it even to be deplored? One longs that a practical mission might feel its way into Kulu and begin sowing seeds of truth, and teach the people the happiness of temperance and goodness, and the greater possibilities of their beautiful valley. If a school such as Mr. Tyndale Biscoe's Kashmiri one were introduced, there might be some hope for the next generation, at all events. The little village school at Manali was taught by a precocious boy not much bigger than his scholars. To resume, Ragonath-ji is the paramount deity of Kulu, but there are others. One even shares his abode in the principal village, Sultanpur, but he is hardly of much account, seeing that only his little black poll has survived the wear and tear of time. Still, such as there is of him makes a third at the Puja done to his superior and the elephant god Hanuman. The story of the Dungri god, which, by the way, is a goddess, is a quaint relic of mythological fable.

She had a rough induction to the temple above Manali raised to her use. She started by being a demon, with a demon for a brother, and they resided somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Rahtang Pass. They both fell under the destroying hand of one who had a mission against demons.

The brother was killed, but perhaps on account of her sex, possibly because of her brazen constitution, the little Harimba escaped with her life, although she was seized and flung far into the air. She fell with some force, one might imagine, and landed on one of her small brass hips in the forest above Manali. The spot was named Dungri, in commemoration of the

bruised 'Dungya,' or hip, and that was, we are told, the origin of that beautiful specimen of ancient architecture which bears carvings representing both Buddhist and Hindu religious subjects.

The demoniacal nature of the presiding goddess would out, however, as human sacrifices were said to have been offered there. But all this, as a native once said to me in connection with some fine remains of ancient sacred stones in our own neighbourhood—'All this happened very long ago, when the gods came down to earth!' Many of the picturesque temples in Kulu are surmounted by an iron bird in the same way that our church steeples are crowned with a weather-cock. But the Kulu birds know their own minds, and are not turned about by every contrary breeze, and are more like doves or pigeons than the barndoor rooster.

It is possible they are intended to represent peacocks, as the feathers of this sacred bird are used alike by the Hindus of Kulu and the Tibetans and Bhotias to decorate their gods' canopies, and their tent-poles.

The Bashist god is a morose-looking impersonation. Carved very roughly in wood, he inhabits a rather gloomy temple beside the sacred hot spring which I have before mentioned. The first thing one sees on peering into his abode are his silver slits of eyes, which gleamed at me, as much as to say: 'You know and I know that I am a fraud, and have nothing to do with that hot water yonder, but if they like to think so, well, let them.' And as I placed four annas in the poor old withered hand of the blear-eyed witch whose business it is to sweep the temple court and arrange fresh flowers at the feet of this gaudily

attired deity, I winked back with my copper-coloured eyes, as much as to answer: 'Of course I know that, and this money is not for you, but for her; and if it pleases her, poor old soul! first of all to lay it with the orange marigolds before you, the religious emotion will do her no harm, and is the best she knows.'

Besides that, I had really enjoyed some benefit from the hot sulphur waters, and why should I not give a trifle to the old dame who kept the precincts clean, whatever may have been the condition of her own person? Would that all natural curative waters were so easily obtained!

I should say, from brief observation, that the fair sex of Bashist do not take full advantage of the hot water so generously bestowed on them by Nature. One would think they must be the cleanest of the clean, and that here was a practical illustration of the old proverb anent cleanliness and godliness. But not a bit of it, although the very rock out of which bubbles the sacred spring is carved with panels of a religious nature, and two temples are hard by. A very beautiful little specimen, too, is the domed stone building on the rising ground above the village. But prophets meet with little recognition in their own country, and so very often do hot springs. Some blessings are made too cheap, and familiarity with them breeds contempt.

Certainly, if I did see one or two women washing clothes of a blackness inexpressible in the overflow from the tank—itself by that time and distance from the source of an inky tint—I saw no local personal ablutions, although pilgrims come from afar to bathe; also the repulsive hairdressing, of which I was an

unwilling witness in passing an altruistic group of Bashist ladies sitting gossiping in the sun, partook of the nature of a dry shampoo, shall we say?

For all that there was a distinct fascination about the village and its Kurhaus. I shall certainly revisit it if I go back to Manali at any time, and shall once again climb that rugged stone staircase from the riverside, and look away again, as I did on those several occasions, from the dirt and ignorance and superstition to the purity of the snow mountains, the blueness of the sky, and the verdure of the valley. At such times thoughts of a comforting nature hush one's cry of protest and appeal in the face of such soil and darkness, physical and mental, stagnating in these backwaters of the river of life. A whisper floats to the ear that Time, as we measure it, is but a day in the Eternal Mind and plan, and that, if it took millions of our years to raise those peaks into the sunshine and purity of everlasting snow from chaotic waters, how can we murmur at the slow uplifting of mankind, the highest creation, into light? The aftermath of one is as certain as of the other. The transformation of Matter is the proof positive of the transformation of that which is higher than Matter, although all is still in a state of transition.

An apology should be offered here for such digression and for the expression of platitudes, but they are forced on one by the contemplation of a picture in which only man figures as vile.

The little guide-book by M. C. Forbes (to which I owe my thanks for some of my information about the Kulu gods) had described a point of interest on the road to the Rahtang Pass; in fact, at its very foot. Under

a big rock a colony of snakes were said to exist—sacred ones, too! That snakes should be regarded with any feelings save those of aversion astounds us, and it reminds one of the Nāg, or snake worship of Kashmir, at one time so prevalent; it was no doubt of the nature of fear rather than of reverence. At all events, we fully intended to stop and put the penny in the slot on our way to the Rahtang. The rock is just opposite the old, and now disused, bangalow at Rahla. We were going to place a saucer of milk—the price the snakes exact before they will show themselves—at their front door; but, alas! the milk was packed in the lunch basket, and for once the coolie carrying it had forged ahead instead of lagging behind us, and so we were denied our snake show.

It happened that on the way back there was no milk left, although the basket was with us. It is as well, perhaps, that Kulu still reserves one or two sights for our next visit.

We were now to leave Kulu for the rainy season. I was longing to get my husband away from the four walls of the bangalow where he had spent so many hours of acute suffering, and we had heard so much of the bracing air of Lahoul that I set off in better heart than I had known for the last month. There was still a haunting anxiety lest all was not quite right with the shoulder, but it was better to go on, and hope and pray for the best—a hope which was mercifully realized, as within a month he was again wielding an ice-axe.

In contrasting Kangra and Kulu, merely as landscapes, with Lahoul and Ladakh, one is tempted to describe the two first as the females and the latter

as males. Just such differences which strike one between men and women seem to exist between these brother and sister countries.

Kangra and Kulu sing a soprano duet, the top notes of which are their charm and beauty. The domestic side, the village life, spinning and weaving, the smiling valleys and sparkling waters, the gracious shade of forests, the fertile fields, the woodland glades carpeted with delicate ferns and flowers, with the grander background of dazzling snows and fine trees—all maintain the theme in the treble.

Lahoul and Ladakh at once take it up with all the harmony of Nature's composition, but they repeat the theme in the bass clef. They tell in deeper tones of the earth's grandeur and solemnity. They strike great chords, and present as much contrast as one finds in the music of Brahms and Schumann.

And yet, of course, Kulu has its grand side as well, and Lahoul has its tender spots. Kulu has her grave moods and Lahoul is adorned here and there with flowers just as a man will wear a buttonhole.

The climates may be said to partake of the same natures. The one more or less delightful, according to the season, but quite different from the keen, vigorous, breezy, dry humour of the other.

Kulu is sheltered, and her children spoilt, for her life is cast in pleasant lines.

Lahoul is exposed, and nurtures a hardy people, whose motto might well be 'the survival of the fittest.' It is just as impossible to say which is best as it is impossible to pronounce upon the merits of men and women. Each has its own character and charm, and to enjoy both confers as much pleasure



Lahouli Boy.



The Shikari.



Kulu Woman.

and benefit upon their visitors as one experiences in the friendship of both men and women.

Kulu in early July was not at her best; she was languid and trying, and it was with a sense of relief we left the valley just before the heavy storms of the Monsoon arrived.

The air the other side of the Rahtang Pass was as different as the climate—as different as iced champagne is from tepid soda-water.

To a walker, which is all I can profess to be, there is always excitement in crossing a pass—the nearest one comes to climbing a mountain. To my humble collection of passes the Rahtang was well worth adding. The last few weeks of anxiety following on my husband's accident had not left me too fit, and therefore I accepted 'Watson's' kind services. He carried me up more than halfway, and was then sent back to join the black pony, as both had to get new shoes for the rough roads of Lahoul. They followed us ten days later.

I soon felt the benefit of the bracing air, however, and when we got up into a mass of alpine flowers of every colour I was all agog to walk.

The long grass banks were covered with mauve primulas and irises of many shades of purple and blue. Anemones and asters, gentians and daisies, and the famous blue poppy grew in mixed bouquets, as gaily mixed as any child's bunch of flowers, but with longer stalks.

The contrasts in the landscape became more vivid every half-hour. We left the richly wooded hills and pleasant paths of Kulu, and took to open downs and stony roads. Now and then we made a short cut

through grass thick with flowers, and then joining the path again would round a rocky corner and find ourselves held up by an impasse of old avalanche snow, and would have to walk cautiously, for the snow had filled up a shady north gully and obliterated any sign of a road. A path was beaten for us, however, by the flocks of sheep and goats ahead. Gaddi shepherds were cheering them on with noisy, oft-repeated cries of 'O-issh!' and the sure-footed little beasts, finding nothing to crop on the snow bridge, were soon safely over. 'Where did they get that word, now?' queried Führer the guide, somewhat indignantly. 'Why, that is the word we use to our sheep.'

The only drawback to this pass was the distress over my husband's poor shoulder, which was causing him great suffering, especially as we neared the top of the pass. How he bore those marches I found it hard to understand.

The month of June had been a very bitter one—sweet cherries notwithstanding! The disappointment was acute, as well as the physical pain, and though I had before now had cheering experience of what a rapid healer he was, still I could not help a great anxiety lest there might be permanent injury to the arm. Recovery from an accident is tedious and trying enough when one is surrounded by home comforts and skilled surgery, but in the wilds it indents largely on faith and courage and patience.

One's inventive powers are also sorely taxed to meet an invalid's demands, and it is often a case of having to make bricks without straw; for instance, extra pillows can only be supplied by stuffing pillow-

cases with spare garments, a teapot has to do duty for a feeding-cup, and so on. But some way of escape very often comes when one is in dire need. I shall never forget with what pleasure I unpacked a basket sent down by our friend Mrs. Tyacke one morning, which contained dainty slices of ham for my invalid's breakfast, for only that moment I had been ruefully searching my store-box, which was needing replenishing, and could find nothing more appetizing in it than Worcester sauce, tea, and Sunlight soap.

The depression caused by the loss of six of the best climbing weeks, at the most hopeful computation, too, was not exactly calculated to improve matters. What we should have done without the help which was forthcoming from all within reach, Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke, and the assistant surgeon from Sultanpur, I do not know.

I shall never forget the joy with which I read a note sent by coolie from the high camp of the climbing party when I was perched up in my little cottage at Kyelang some six weeks later, in which my husband told me that he had climbed a twenty-thousand-foot mountain without any harm to the injured shoulder.

We have both certainly been singularly unfortunate on several of our expeditions. I can contribute a broken ankle and a serious illness to the list of casualties. But if we have been unfortunate in falling into pits, we have also been more than fortunate in being helped out of them again; and this I add for the comfort of other travellers. We are none the worse for having had to bear a good deal more pain

and discomfort from the fact of being out of reach of home.

Many people have said to me that they cannot imagine what I find to fascinate me so much in mountain travel. It is not an easy question to answer. The fascination exists, that is very clear; but it is hard to make those understand who are not lovers of Nature in her isolation that one counts the cost and finds it well worth while to leave the beaten track occasionally.

There is rather a tendency in these days to prefer madding crowds to the haunts of Nature; still, no one can dictate to another how he shall best enjoy himself. Some prefer the Gulmargs of the world, some the quiet of the mountains or forests, some the towns and theatres; but there is an open-air stage which is always crowded with picture and incident, and fortunately one can get a stall seat which one pays for in kind instead of cash. Even the hard cash it costs is anything but misspent money. 'Chacun à son goût.' It would bore me inexpressibly to sit and watch polo or trail round a golf-course when I might be in a Himalayan camp, and my camps would be dubbed dull as ditch-water by many a devotee of the links. Live and let live is the best policy; but still the thought occurs to one that as a whole we do all live too much on the town side of life in Indian stations—one might almost call it the suburban—for we live in the country and far too often wear towny clothes. It seems somehow incongruous taking smart things to Kashmir, and the social amenities of station life would be much better enjoyed if there was a lull in them and a change of play for a couple

of months in the year. 'Back to the land' is an excellent tonic, but 'People and ever people' is often recommended as a better one still. There is one thing which one can only get in open spaces, and that is, pure air. In no place can it compare with that of the mountains.

In the keen, sweet air of the Himalaya lies a thing of great price, for in the plains and crowded stations of India one's senses are so often assailed by unpleasant sights and odours that to get away on to a hilltop, where one may, without fear, draw breath after breath with an ecstasy of delight, is in itself worth much.

The scent of the pine-trees in sunshine after rain, of the fresh grass trodden first by one's own feet, of roses and jasmine, bracken and fern; to press in the hand, as one walks, the juicy walnut leaf and inhale its fragrance; even the aromatic scent of the wild fennel trodden on bare hillsides as one toils upwards, to say nothing of the cool night breezes or the keen mountain air of higher altitudes—all these are a thousand times worth the latest perfume of the chemist's still-room.

To exchange a used-up atmosphere for one all untainted is to make one, in popular parlance, a new creature. Clogs seem to be struck from the feet, and a load loosed from the shoulders.

It was with just such a feeling that we left the now played-out air of Kulu for the keen breezes of Lahoul.

A day in this air was enough to fire one to do more than passively enjoy, so we left the palatial eighty-pound tent at Koksar, and went off for a two-day trip up the Sonapani Glacier.

The wind above the river, although all one could wish for in quality, was, if anything, a little too windy. We were under the shelter of a large rock, but the fine sand driven into every crevice of the tents by the searching Koksar wind—a very special brand—was a trial. Fully to appreciate that wind was to make for grassy pastures, and this we did.

A deliciously sunny day saw us all set off, a cheery party, with three stalwart Lahoulis to carry my 'dandy.'

The dogs raced along in the grass, which looked like a silver sheet, blown slantwise as it was; the flowers grew more abundant every hour.

The counting of marches in the hills is, of course, by the hour, not the mile. In that wide, neutral-tinted landscape the bright hues of the alpine flowers supplied just the note of distinct colour for which the eye longed; then one was able to appreciate the grey and brown, green and white of that expanse of hills. The river, now far beneath us, wound along in silver silence, and the Spiti Mountains filled up the distant horizon with crystal prisms against a cloudless blue sky. We certainly breathed our fill of pure mountain air that day, but indeed one never seems to be long satisfied; we felt it almost a relief to turn up at last into the shelter of the Sonapani Valley. Our grassy carpet merged into a rocky, climbing track, more fitted for goats than myself, I felt at times.

At last we emerged on to a high valley, where we lunched, resting against sun-warmed rocks, beside a bubbling stream. Our laden coolies came straggling

by, and copied our example, squatting down at some little distance.

The rest of the walk was too rough for dandying, and I found hopping over boulders could soon pall on one; but after crossing a snow bridge and creeping up the opposite hill rather wearily, a sight of the garden of potentillas up above chased away all my fatigue.

Every shade of which that flower is capable spread out before us. Crimson, so dark as to be almost black sometimes, or so rich as to vie with a poppy—scarlet, rose, pink, yellow, orange; the galaxy of colour was wonderful. A perfect setting for all this brilliance was supplied by the silver backing to the leaves, stirred by the breeze. Our camp was pitched above a shallow lake of aquamarine tint, the end of the glacier, which matched the green of our tents.

I always think there is a special place in the architecture of the mountains filled by glaciers. To know that they are on the move all the time makes one somehow respect them, though it is hard to associate the idea of perpetual motion with a glacier.

We were denied the fine sight accorded to Führer and Lalbahadur, but we promised ourselves that the next visit to Lahoul shall give it to us, too.

Another equally lovely day saw us back at Koksar, and then began the trek up Lahoul. Glaciers became a common sight, but none the less appreciated for that reason; indeed, we got into the heart of the mountains. 'Surely we must stop and climb this one, and that one, and that glorious one over there!' I used to exclaim. But the weather-wise husband shook his head, and reminded me of the Monsoon

pressing on our heels. We must get beyond its beat, and there were plenty of mountains beyond, and yet farther on still, more than enough.

Beyond crossing the Babboo, Rahtang, and a few other passes, and a long climb up to the foot of the mountain dominating our Lahoul cottage, where I started with a generous handicap, I cannot lay claim to any mountaineering on this expedition. The magnificent views I got of the peaks—not, of course, to be compared to those which the climbers deservedly won—were often enjoyed in an *édition de luxe* as I lay in bed, wrote letters, or had meals in and out of doors. I do not mean to say that I was never tired or did not work at all for my enjoyment, but a great deal was thrown in as an extra, free gratis, for nothing, and there is nothing to prevent any lady from doing the same; in fact, it seemed to me that the ordinary pedestrian, in Kulu certainly, gets far better and many more views of the snows than are to be seen on most parts of road work in Kashmir.

Though the general colouring of Lahoul cannot compare with Kulu, still the former country has its moments when it eclipses the sister valley. The evening afterglow, for instance, which transforms the snows and even bare hillsides into living warmth, is different from any evening effect in a more richly wooded country. These moments are short-lived, but flood the landscape with ruby, amethyst, and deep purple, and azure and gold. Here, again, the contrast in the two countries is marked, and the *abandon* of the setting sun in Lahoul is like the rare moments when the reserve of a strong man breaks down and

he lets himself go, and for a few moments reveals the depth and beauty of his nature. The colour did not even all fade away with the light, for we noticed a peculiar shade of clear violet which lingered on into the starlit night. The marvellous clearness of the atmosphere allowed us to see even more than the usual brilliant mass of stars which an Indian night is noted for.

All our camps in Lahoul were delightfully unlike each other. There was some special interest or charm about each one. The Koksar halt, beside a two-roomed bangalow, was set in grey and brown with sandy banks and a full-flowing river. We were right under the mountains, so until one climbed up some good distance one was unaware of the peaks above. A most perfect day was spent upon high moors facing this panorama of snows.

The Sissu Camp was a perch on the hillside, with a pretty rural entourage of fresh grass, willow-trees, and flowery meadows. One beautiful mountain towered well in view, and great rugged rocky hills rose on two sides.

My husband was by this time able to take long scrambles, and while he was out on a reconnaissance I walked over to see the little Buddhist monastery which crowned a steep bank above the river. The Lama in charge was very civil, and let me look into the inner room or temple. It was very humble in its appointment, but had one very finely illuminated banner. The rich colours and untarnished gold stood out in bold contrast to the gloom and dirt of the rough little room. From the monastery I climbed up as far as I could, hoping to catch a sight of the Sissu

Glacier, but it was blocked by a mountain which was beyond me.

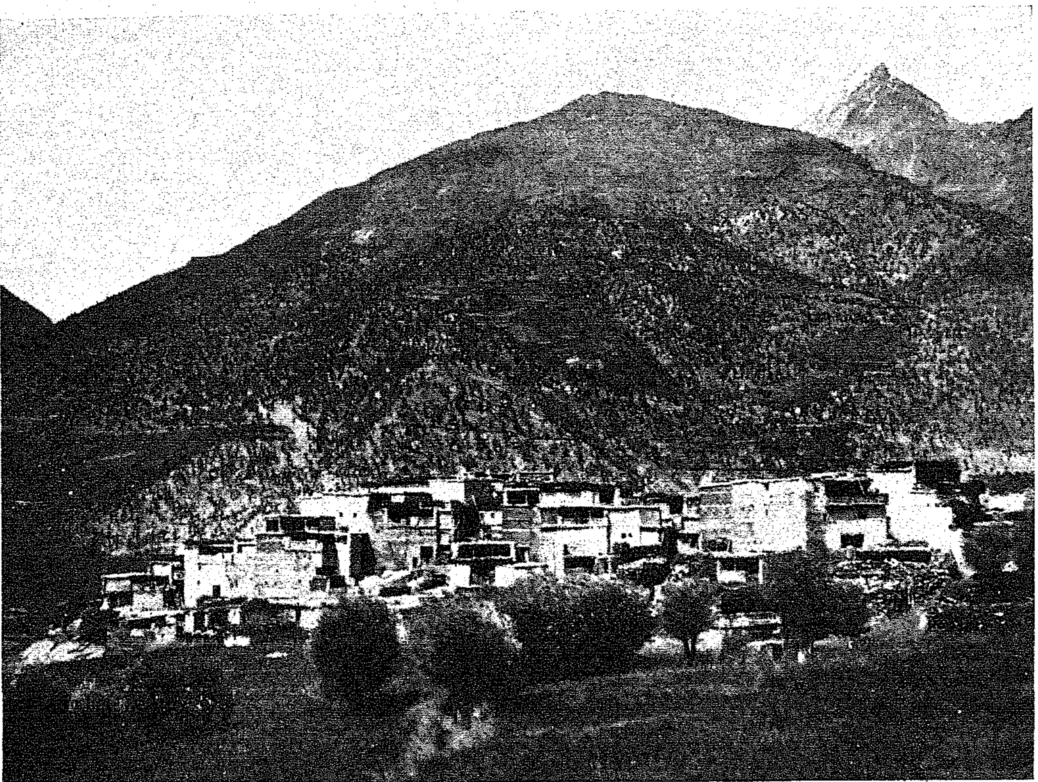
The rocks were full of marmots, and in a flash my dachshund was after them, and I spent an anxious hour searching and whistling. Just when he had enough, and not a moment sooner, my lord quietly reappeared, panting his heart out, and we returned to camp.

First of all, however, I had gathered from the bare hillside a handkerchief full of the luscious 'blue' grass for the ponies who had arrived from Kulu. They rolled their tongues over it as if it was the best French chocolate.

I think I was never so glad to see any bangalow at the end of a long march as that at Kyelang.

The Gaphan god must have cast his evil eye on us that day, for the morning began in a cross-question and crooked answer sort of mood. First of all, no coolies were forthcoming, then a few straggled in, then the party divided up into two—always a fatal thing for a party to do—and I started, to be overtaken at Gundla by Führer. We misunderstood arrangements, and thought we were to make a double march, so pressed on to Kyelang, which we reached at dusk.

Our tea coolie had lagged behind, and it was a full hour after our arrival before we got any food. But the rearguard, poor things! had come on our tracks at Gundla to find one meal where they had looked for two and a night's rest, so they set forth on the historic crossing of an unknown pass by night. Fortunately, by the end of this long day, the captious god must have tired of our dogged perseverence and



Kyelang Village.

sought his rest, as all ended well by 2 a.m., when I regaled my wet but triumphant travellers on a hearty meal.

Kyelang is like a barbaric jewel—a roughly cut emerald in a bronze and silver setting. In plain words, it is an oasis of green fields and willow-planted water-courses surrounded with brown hills and snowy heights. The bangalow was on a green platform above rich fields of barley, and as we breakfasted out on the grass in the sunshine we felt a smiling welcome to Lahoul. We were all loth to turn our backs on Kyelang so quickly, but the climbers were thirsting for the fray, and so, after just starting an acquaintance, to be pleasantly continued later on, we set off for Patseo.

Besides calling on Mr. and Mrs. Schnabel at the Moravian mission-house, we carried off some of their incomparable fresh butter and honey and bread, all as good as only fresh farm-produce can be.

Our next halting-place was, indeed, the back of beyond. It was like nothing but a huge rubbish-heap which had been forgotten by Nature's dust-cart. There were charming bits on the march, and grand glimpses of mountains and glaciers, and the halfway house at Darcha had been made notable by a draught of fishes; but the nearer we got to Patseo the more desolate grew the country. With its great heaps of red, rocky earth and rubbish it looked like a huge deserted mining district, minus the ruined houses one sees at such places.

Patseo itself was not quite so impossible, as, after turning a last wild corner, we came upon a wide plain, on which were spread out many traders' camps

—a scene of busy bartering of tea and wool, etc. The sheep, both Tibetan and Indian, were fascinating—the former with their beautiful fleeces which they had brought to market; the latter, brave little creatures, making marches, pack-laden with tea and salt. To me there was an additional pleasure in knowing that none of them would ever be killed for food. Every morning the different flocks would stream over the narrow bridge which spanned the turbulent river in search of grazing, and every evening saw them stream back to their respective camps.

I was ten days or so at Patseo, and as in the absence of the climbing party my walks were rather curtailed, I used to wander about the precincts of the camps, and watch the interesting business going on there. The shearing was quickly and carefully done, and the huge fleeces fell away from rather forlorn-looking little animals, but I dare say they parted from their large coats quite cheerfully. Less to carry home, anyway.

Then the winding and coiling of the wool into ropes and bundles for transport back to India was full of picturesque incident.

The only flowers to be found in this arid region were a few blue poppies and a few stunted edelweiss.

At all halts I did a good deal of the family wash. Pulling and patting, in place of ironing, and saying often a good word for 'Lux' and Sunlight soap.

Housekeeping grew a little anxious in places like Patseo, as there were no supplies, of course, and I had three hungry men to satisfy instead of one as usual. Two of them were confirmed porridge eaters,

and milk was not to be had for love or money. We made excellent shift, however, with Emprote.

In view of the fact that very shortly the party would be running its own meals, I divided up all our stores into four baskets, one for each week of their absence, so as to insure their not eating all the chocolate on one mountain when I had turned my back; for my husband wished me to go back to Kyelang when they made for their high camps, which, of course, were out of the question for me.

Patseo was certainly a dreary spot to stay in alone, and I knew it would be a comfort to him while climbing to know I was near friends; but it was with very mixed feelings that I set off for Kyelang, for here I was within a march and a half, and Kyelang was much more cut off from even news of them. Two days after they left I was able to despatch the invaluable Kehar Sing after them, cured of his fever, and bearing a batch of fresh cakes. Then, my transport having arrived, I turned back to Kyelang, with the good little Gurkha youth, Patti Bahadur, my cook and factotum, one other servant, and the dogs.

Patti was growing a greater treasure every day. A born cook, once he understood our ways, and always willing and good. The air of the responsible, trusted servant which he felt himself, and rightly, to be sat very quaintly on his boyish face. Alas! he is now a recruit, and looks shyly at me out of the tail of his eye as I pass the parade ground and see him in all the bravery of scarlet cap and new rifle.

The march was not as cheery as on the way up, but all went well, and I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. and Mrs. Donald, of Kulu, at the bangalow. They

kindly made me join them at lunch, for which I was ready after a long walk, even with Watson's assistance. I then went down to see Mr. and Mrs. Schnabel, who gave me all the information about their cottage above, which I was to inhabit. I was introduced to two dear little girls, 'Mariechen' and 'die Dolley.' After tea I started off in some excitement uphill. Watson was weary, so I left him in a stable and walked; but I had not realized that the cottage was one thousand three hundred feet above Kyelang, and it was a pull at the end of an arduous march.

So thought my other servant (Patti had gone on with the baggage), for I found him halfway up seated on the hillside, weeping real tears, which dripped on to the dusty path. 'Shabash!' (Well done!) I panted; 'it's quite close now.' But was it! For full another five hundred feet we climbed. The dogs were even a little tired by the time we arrived on top, and then I was enchanted and felt it worth while. The approach was guarded by the mission-farm—quite a nice building. A few more steep steps, under shady willow-trees, brought me to a little gate up stone steps on to a terrace planted with juniper-trees, and there stood Patti smiling, at the door of a dear little flat-roofed, mud-plastered cottage. It was like an Italian cottage. A strip of veranda led into a cheerful parlour, where my supper-table was neatly spread. A hot bath was ready, and I fell asleep to the music of a water-course which gurgled past my bedroom window.

My waking eyes fell on glaciers and mountains, for my bed was close to the open window, and the most

perfect air in the world soon drew me out on the mountain-side. It was a splendid prospect truly, and a fine day made my heart light for the sake of my climbers.

Needless to say, I did not go down to Kyelang the next two days, but strolled about the precincts of the cottage with the dogs, after having settled my small possessions into wall cupboards and shelves, and set Patti and his kitchen in order. There was an excellent German stove in it, and we used to bake and despatch by the post-coolie fresh cakes to the mountaineers.

To follow a water-course to its high source is an enticing object for a walk, and morning and evening I and the dogs, who could safely race about to their hearts' content over miles of hillside, rambled about. I was out by seven, and rarely in to breakfast till ten o'clock, and grew fitter and better every day.

After two days' rest I went down, by invitation, to tea at the mission-house. The work among the Lahoulis done by these devoted Moravian missionaries is worth description. Its practical nature cannot fail to produce good results, and it is indeed to be hoped that it will never be allowed to lapse.

I was asked if I would like to join the Sunday morning service, so the Sunday after my installation at Tingste Cottage saw me leave that sunny little eyrie at nine o'clock. I had to descend one thousand three hundred feet, but was acquiring 'high lungs,' and made shorter work of the distance than at first. About still three hundred above Kyelang I could see the flat roofs and écru-coloured walls in a sea of green fields; I could also hear the church gong receiving

lusty strokes from some zealous little Christian, so hurried down as fast as I could, leaving the dogs under a tree with their attendant, and arrived just in time. A small congregation was assembled in the Schnabels' hall, and a voluntary was being played by Mrs. Schnabel. I was given the Tibetan translations of some of our hymns, as well as the Psalms and Gospels, which, naturally, I could only follow by instinct. I was immensely struck by the reverence and heartiness with which the people, men and women, joined, and even the children, when a well-known hymn or prayer was said or sung.

As to the singing, it was really remarkable to hear those Tibetan Lahoulis singing the fine old Lutheran chants and hymns in their own language. Their voices could not be called musical, but were not much less true to time and tune than a village congregation in one of our least musical counties at home.

There is no church in Kyelang, and the school-room was under repair, so the people sat round on the floor, looking very nice in their sober woollen dresses, which were relieved by bright silver ornaments set with coral, amber, and turquoise.

The two very apparent changes wrought in these people by their conversion are, first of all, cleanliness, which redeems their plain features; and, besides that, a certain look it is difficult to describe. A child might say 'they looked good.' This look, added to cleanliness and the cheery, humorous expression of the Mongolian type of countenance, produced a *tout ensemble* that was very attractive.

There is no doubt about there being something in the Mongolian quite different from other natives of

India. There is a tenseness and frankness about them, physically and morally, which is somehow lacking in the ordinary people. They are not natural intriguers, and they are naturally generous and open-handed. The sermon at the service just described was preached by Mr. Peter, a pastor from Leh. He is a fluent speaker in Tibetan, and certainly held his audience, to judge by their quiet attention and look of appreciation.

I was asked to stay to the midday dinner, and also to tea; and while Mrs. Schnabel was busy with the children's Sunday-school, sat reading in the sunny little parlour.

At dinner we all engaged in lively and friendly conversation over the relationship between Germany and England. Mr. Peter's opinion was that war would never be lightly courted so long as we bestowed the advantage of Free Trade on his country. Mr. Schnabel is a reservist, and earnestly hopes that he will never be summoned to fight for the Fatherland. He is safe enough in Kyelang, however much the authorities may wish to recall him, for between December and May the pass is closed by the stern decree of winter, and the key is yielded to no one. Again, he is fairly safe from May to December, as he would be stopped at his first march down the valley, and be returned to Kyelang on parole.

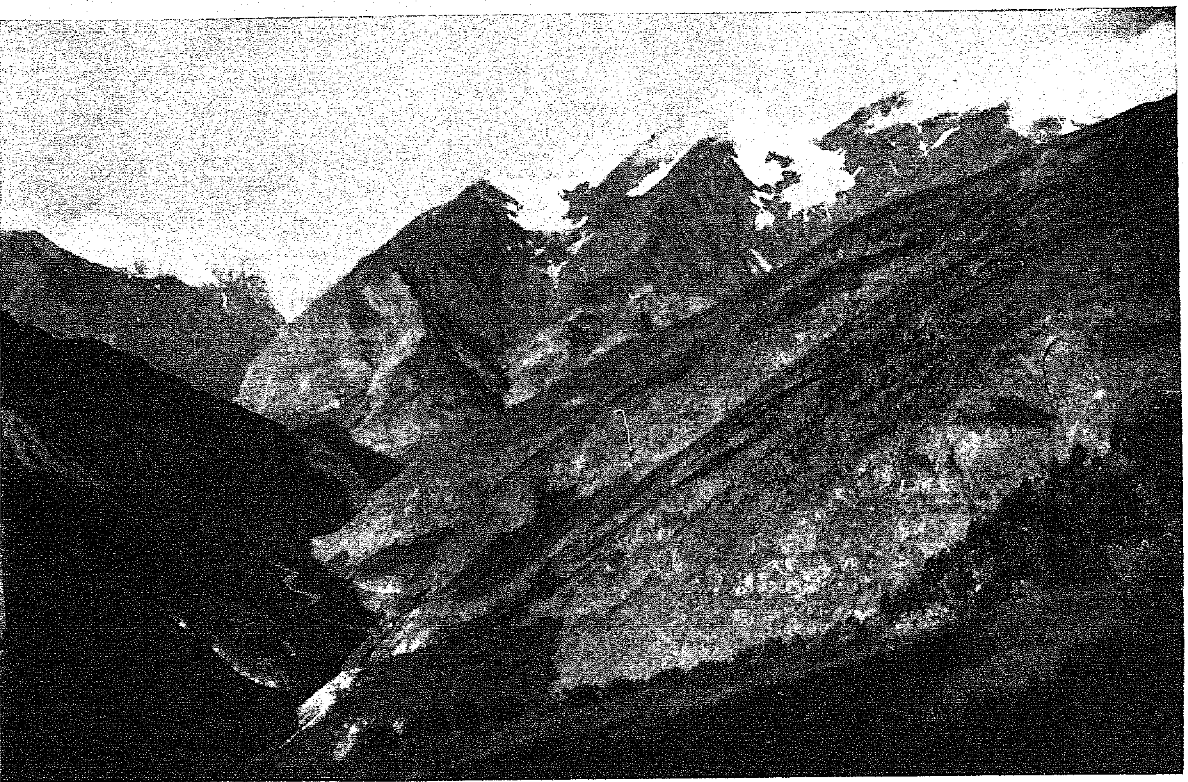
Our tea that afternoon was graced by the elder Miss Schnabel, little Mariechen, who is about four years old. My heart misgave me over that delicate little snowflake of a child. How would she face the severe winter? I have been very thankful to hear since that she is much stronger.

The smaller sister, 'die Dolley,' is as robust and sturdy as possible, and promises to be a great character. The vexed question of the day, Votes for Women, finds an ardent supporter in Miss Dorothea Schnabel, of Kyelang. She breaks everything which she has a fancy to break. Even the gentle non-militant sister's property is not safe with her. The one cheering safeguard for that household, however, is that 'die Dolley' does not number a hammer among her toys, and that there is no danger of her ever resorting to forcible feeding. She does justice to her food, and helps Mariechen at meal-time more than at play.

Mrs. Schnabel is splendid at all household avocations, and her storeroom was my envy. I met for the first time in India the excellent German 'Zwieback,' and was granted the recipe. Throughout these three weeks we also had many a cosy chat over our needlework. It was quite a privilege to join in the darning of 'die Dolley's' socks, for I feel sure she will make her mark in the active world. Little Mariechen's socks, too—the same size as her sister's—had many a loving prayer sewn into them, that those little feet might live for many a year, and carry their gentle owner into happy lines.

Their mother is a fine woman, with plenty of bright humour and pluck. The former is a valuable asset when one lives a life of rather dreary routine, and must needs manufacture most of one's fun at home. The word 'pluck' is but an inadequate one for the quality which sustains such souls in such places as distant Kyelang.

The pathos of these isolated lives struck me very



Bhaga Valley, Kyelang.

forcibly as I walked from the willow-shaded path leading from the house to the 'God's acre' below. For, enclosed within stone walls and entered by a gate from the lower garden was the little cemetery, full of graves. Under the protecting branches of willows and poplars rested the bodies of two children of this family, as well as those of several other small boys and girls. There are memorial tablets to some adults, too, but the greater proportion are to young children. No doubt the height of Kyelang—ten thousand feet—is a trying altitude for a sick person, and the heart fails quickly under such acute illnesses as pneumonia. Fortunately, for anyone in ordinary condition it is a healthy, although a rigorous, climate, and no malarial germs, at all events, can prosper.

The long climb back to my cottage perch after such days out was no doubt very salutary. Apart from any physical benefit, these evenings were in themselves a pure delight. The scent of ripening hay and meadow flowers was delicious, and the perfumed air grew more keen and reviving as I followed the ascending zigzag path. It is very steep, and one soon acquires condition while leading a healthy life in that glorious air. The evening sunlight was casting rose and amethyst lights upon the mountains, warming their snowy tops and glaciers; and the green of the fields and willow-trees was vividly shot with gold, while the clearest of skies domed the whole beautiful scene.

As I passed the farm which guards the approach to the cottage, the cheery farmer's wife came out to greet me, promising the evening's milk in ten minutes; and then the walls of my little mud hut glowed

through the trees with a warm ochre, and at the gate, getting a bit anxious at my being out late, stood Patti, with his kindly welcome, holding the post-bag—the English one, too, sent up by Mr. Luk Luk, the postmaster.

The arrival of a panting coolie with a letter of good news from the climbing party gave the cheering touch to the ending of my peaceful Lahoul-Tibetan Sunday.

I became so much attached to that Tingste Cottage that I could not help shedding tears when we had to leave it, and I think the most beautiful vibrations must still cling to the walls since the days when the 'Father and Mother,' as the people still call them—Mr. and Mrs. Heyde, by whom the cottage was built over fifty years ago—were the parents of the mission. Certainly an ineffable peace seemed to invest the humble little abode.

The reason of its building is rather delightful. During the old Russo-Afghan scare the Heydes, fearing a Russian raid, erected Tingste Cottage as a place of refuge, being at such a safe height above Kyelang. It reminds me of another Russian scare story which is told at the expense of an ex-chaplain, now deceased, in our own station. He is said to have buried in his compound seventy thousand eggs, 'against the Russians,' as the maids say. There is an idea that, in consequence, that part of the station is less healthy than others.

I felt so keenly, somehow, what the two houses in Kyelang must have been to Mrs. Heyde (her husband is now dead), that I could not refrain from writing and telling her of the happy time we were

spending in Tingste, and how I enjoyed my walks along the water-courses they had planted. A most appreciative letter came in due time in response, and I think it pleased the old lady to think that others besides their own community recognized their landmarks, were interested in their old home, and could testify to the fact that all was prospering. Mrs. Heyde must be a wonderful woman, for at her advanced age she is the corrector of the translation proofs of those parts of the Bible which are still being added for the use of the Tibetan-speaking people.

Naturally, I did not spend the whole of my three weeks, or nearly that, at Tingste on the mountain-side. There was plenty of much valued time for reading and writing; also for cooking, although, shared with Patti, that was not arduous. One day I had a lunch and tea party, consisting of the mission-house family, augmented by two medical missionaries from Chamba, who were spending a few days at Kyelang. Printing photographs, developing those sent in by my husband, and washing and mending, with plenty of meditation, filled up all odd spaces, and made the days pass happily, until that extra special one dawned which brought the climbing party back in grand health and spirits.

With a generous lunch-basket befitting the conquering heroes, Patti, the dogs, and I slipped down the hill I now knew so well, and spread the repast in the veranda of the wooden bangalow. It was grand meeting such a troop of hard, brown men, thin and burnt with work and exposure, and thrilling to hear all their feats in the mountains. Our dogs were sad to part with the 'Batcha,' and went more softly

the next day. He was such a jolly little rascal. He led them into all their escapades, and headed the wild dashes after young chikore with which the daily walks were enlivened. He used to race along rather like an automatic toy, with a long pink flannel tongue hanging out of black india-rubber lips. What an insulting description of a valuable sporting dog!

The Batcha used to sleep on a mat in my room; but one night I was awakened by a dismal howl, and, tracing it to its source, found the poor Batcha had been left in the parlour. He was sitting in the half of a small 'pilgrim' basket, which fitted him like a jelly-mould, lifting up his voice in deep self-pity. Very soon he was happily settled on his own mat, having received a brotherly welcome from the other two dogs.

We all felt sad at breaking up our cheery party. The climbing diary was very gratifying, though, and we had beautiful mementoes in the boxes of tiny negatives carefully stored away. I was quite ready to enjoy a *tête-à-tête* with my husband, and was looking forward to the rest of our tour back through Kulu, though sorry that his climbing was over and had been so curtailed.

We spent another delightful ten days at Tingste Cottage, and had a fine scramble right up to the foot of Machu, as well as many rambles about the mountain-sides.

I suppose we all have some favourite colour in flowers as well as fabrics. My special loves are blue flowers of every description, and the blue Tibetan poppy comes high in the list. Not so high as the wonderful specimen I found years ago in the Wardwan

Valley beyond Kashmir—that stands alone until I find its replica—and on the Machu mountain-side I found a clump growing in a rocky cave, as humbly hidden as any violet.

I had several rather hazardous scrambles after these plants, never noticing, in my zeal to get seed-pods, the steepness of the banks, and quite oblivious of scratches and grazes until afterwards. For I actually did manage to bring away some seed; and then some imp or goblin, probably in old god Jamlu's employ, must have spirited the packet away until the sowing season had passed, for I could find it nowhere. It will turn up, no doubt, some day, but there is small hope of its coming to any good end. I am very doubtful, all the same, of coaxing this poppy to grow at our much lower altitude, if it takes after its brothers in the flesh, for Tibetans cannot survive a plain's temperature. Ten thousand feet above the level of the sea is the lowest at which they are happy. The finest specimen I have ever seen of this blue poppy was growing on the Tragbal Pass in Kashmir. The plant measured forty-eight inches in length, had fifty-six flowers, buds, and seed-pods, out of which twenty-seven were in full bloom. But the blue poppy of the Wardwan is far more beautiful.

Of course, we were seeing Lahoul in the most debonair of moods. It is not hard, however, to picture what a difference there must be during the winter months. The short winter days and long, dark evenings, when the snow is silently falling and piling up into deep drifts, must more than ever accentuate its aloofness—a contrast, indeed, to the hot plains of India, with their blazing sunshine and

parching fields. Such vivid contrasts are brought home to one the more one travels in India, and one is tempted to wish things were more fairly apportioned. Whenever we go to a forest camp, our Indian servants—and we ourselves, what is more—sigh for the waste of wood fuel and unlimited water. What a boon it would be in our dry frontier station, where both are limited! What would not Lahoul give for some of the geniality of the plains, and what bliss would not some of the cool breezes of the high Himalaya bestow on the languid, flat, low-lying ground which extends for hundreds of burning miles? This planet has surely still to come to its golden age!

The hills—that inadequate word we use to express any rise in the earth's crust, from an ant-hill to Mount Everest—the hills are the most highly dowered parts of the world, and their drawbacks even make them more beneficial to mankind. From a physical point of view, finer races are produced where the air is pure, as at higher altitudes is of course the case, and where men are forced to walk up and down hill, and to make more effort in all their movements and pursuits. I certainly think all the hill-folk we meet in the hills are better in every way than the people of the plains.

The long winter days in Kyelang have been considerably lighted up for the Lahoulis by the mission centre, and firelight gleaming on the busy knitting-pins plied by the Kyelang women and girls as they gradually complete the large orders for socks and stockings and other woollen goods placed during the summer before they are cut off from the post is by

no means the only or the brightest light now spreading around the district.

The Buddhism of Lahoul is debased by long and increasing superstition, and has fallen from its first high ideal. The spirit has fled, leaving but a withered corpse. The Lamas go regularly every winter through the appointed yearly reading of their scriptures. We saw books upon books of age-worn manuscripts in gaily lacquered wooden covers. They are kept in the library racks of the monastery. These volumes are carried round to the villages, and the Lamas billet themselves upon their flock, receiving food and lodging in return for 'making their souls.' Day by day they gabble through the books. Often, probably in a household of meagre menage, in order to get through more quickly, two or three Lamas will read aloud at the same time; but no one listens. Religion is the monk's business, not theirs. Nothing could furnish greater proof than this utter indifference displayed by the people themselves that the spirit of their religion has passed away. It has degenerated into the letter, and also into demonology. The winter is also the time chosen, and well chosen, for the grafting in of real truth, and there is hope for success, for the hereditary capacity—one might almost say instinct—for assimilating abstract teaching is an important factor. But the wisdom of those who have taught, and are teaching, in Lahoul is demonstrated by the success with which practice is combined with theory. It is a triumph that the Christian farmer is also the most successful, and the flock still outside the fold recognize the benefit their neighbours are enjoying. I do not mean for a

moment that there is any distinct favour conferred upon converts, but their faces speak for them.

The very fact that the sacred phrase, once pregnant with mystical significance, is now a mere charm committed to prayer-wheels and fluttering flags 'in vain repetition' is only another sign that the letter has ousted the spirit.

At the same time, one cannot help feeling to a certain extent the remnants of a religious atmosphere as one wanders round this ancient monastery. Though the ideas depicted on its walls are barbaric, nevertheless, the beautiful colours of the frescoes, the silken textures and lovely hues of their sacred banners; the dignity of the figures, notably of the Buddha, and the offerings of such humble flowers and fruits as the people can furnish; the musical tones of bells and gongs; the sonorous roll of the drums; even the Lamas themselves (when they are sober), in their robes and with their dignified mien, attended by their acolytes—all these religious accompaniments, husk and shell though they now are, waft an echo to us of Romish ritual (though the Tibetan is, of course, far more ancient), all the more remarkable for the obscure setting in which it exists.

The Moravian mission among the Tibetans and Lahoulis was started in 1856. In this year the first mission-house at Kyelang was built, and those walls, since shaken by earthquake, are full of memories, and have witnessed many scenes of home life. Any far-off settlement of a little band of devoted people who are giving the best years of their lives to help others commands one's respect, but a special admiration is due to such as are cut off

for half the year by a snowy barrier like the Rahtang Pass.

The Rev. A. W. Heyde and a friend, Mr. Pagell, started the first work in Lahoul. From the beginning it was run on practical as well as spiritual lines, and they entered into the agricultural life of the peasants. They were soon joined by Mr. Jasckbe, an able linguist, who gathered his intimate knowledge of the Tibetan tongue from his long periods of residence with the country people. He compiled a dictionary, and framed a grammar, and translated the New Testament into classical Tibetan. But Mr. Heyde and his wife (for as a bride Mrs. Heyde arrived in Kyelang, and did not leave it again until she left it for good, forty-three years later) became great scholars also. They revised the New Testament translation, putting it into colloquial Tibetan, more easily taught to, and understood by, the humble converts of the peasant class.

The old dwelling-house of the mission was abandoned when its top story was wrecked in the earthquake of 1906, and a new house on a higher, healthier site was the gift of Isabella Bird (Mrs. Bishop) after her visit to Kyelang. She spent two or three weeks in the cottage I love. I have lately heard from Mr. Schnabel that he has been able to repair the old house, which will be very useful for school classes and services. It will be a pleasure to Mrs. Heyde to know that the walls which are so full to her of memories of joy and sorrow (they lost several children at Kyelang), and the scene of so many anxious days in the early years of their work, are not to crumble away, at any rate, in this generation. One feels

sure that encouragement will come. As it is, the number of converts has more than doubled in the last five years.

I could not help vividly picturing to myself, as I turned the corner which hides Kyelang from any further view of the road to the outer world, the last farewell of the venerable Mr. and Mrs. Heyde, as they left it with almost breaking hearts, never to see it again; for, after all, exile though it was in a sense, they had made it their home for over fifty years, and had given up their life and home circle in Germany for the sake of the Tibetans.

And now the Schnabels are following in their footsteps, though, of course, the greater ease with which the voyage to and fro is nowadays accomplished makes it improbable that history will ever quite repeat the first fifty years of the mission.

The story of the other pioneer and his wife, who also came out as a young bride, is a stirring one. Mr. and Mrs. Pagell started the centre at a place in the Upper Sutlej Valley, called Poo, also in the year 1865. For eighteen years they worked there, often terribly depressed, but persevering in the face of all difficulties, and they had many converts. At last they both fell ill (I believe their illness was enteric fever). At all events, they became convinced that they could not recover, for they had their coffins and shrouds prepared. It was in the winter, when they were cut off from all communication with the outer world, and could get no help.

Fortunately, the poor wife only survived her husband three days. He died on January 4. Then poor brave Mrs. Pagell, feeling her own end was near,

laid herself in her coffin. She died on January 7. They were buried by their converts, and the headman of the village at once sealed up their effects; and when, in answer to the sad news and appeal from the Tibetan Christians the following May, a member of the mission was able to push through to Poo, he found all in perfect order.

It is difficult to imagine anything braver or more pathetic. Mr. and Mrs. Schnabel themselves had charge of this centre for some eight years, and one of their little ones was buried in the mission-house garden at Poo. They have now been working among the Lahouli Tibetans for eighteen years.

Our return to the Kulu Valley found it in the best of tempers. The local gods, having presumably been satisfied, gave no further evidence of annoyance, and we were allowed to pursue our way in peace without receiving threatening messages.

The first march on the way back from Kyelang I made alone, not feeling quite competent to climb the Tilbu-ri, and I was quite glad to have taken the road, as I thus saw the junction of the two rivers the Chandra and Bhaga. At the sharp right angle in which they meet there is an impact of the two strong currents, which break into white surf and then ripple on together, washing a silver strand. Otherwise the walk was rather a dull one, if one can describe such huge country by such a word.

But as I approached Gundla, where we intended to stay two days, there was a splendid view of the Gaphan Mountain, and also of the Thakur's seven-storied fortress residence. It stood out most effectively in its rich brown stone.

Carved on a huge rock at the entrance to the village, rough but impressive, were two large figures, most probably very ancient. I should like to have been at the artist's elbow when he worked out his ideas in that delightful open-air studio.

In spite of misty weather there were every now and again grand glimpses of the Gundla Massif towering above the river gorge.

A perfectly lovely crossing of the Rahtang followed three days of incessant rain. Everything sparkled, and the Spiti snows lit up the distance entrancingly. We found a very different climate to that we had left in early July, and the contrast of richly wooded forest hills and grass after severe Lahoul was an enticing one. The flowers were almost over but there was no lack of colour, as the autumn tints were already showing in brilliant touches amongst the dark forest trees, and it was harvest-time.

The trip up the Hamta Valley was the next novelty for me, and I am sure it gained by keeping. I should say that the autumn was the best time to visit it, unless one went in very early summer. Starting ahead so as to take a gentler pace on a rather hot, steamy afternoon, I walked through the terraced rice-fields, now bearing a fine crop, until I reached the first village, and sat down to await the rest of the party under a splendid tree which shaded the little village green. In the stone-paved courtyards of the village homesteads the scent of hot hay spread out to dry was very pleasant, and sufficiently pungent to more than hold its own among other and less savoury odours.

Very soon I was surrounded by staring villagers,

and we engaged in a tentative conversation, chiefly on the topical questions of crops and children; and the weather, of course, had to be discussed. Presently, however, I discovered that the plausible gentleman who was assuring me almost *ad nauseam* of his willingness to serve me was no other than the inhuman wretch who had refused help to my husband when he passed through this very village, hardly able to creep along, so severe were his sufferings. All that had been asked was that a man might be sent on ahead a matter of three miles or so to tell me, so that I might send out help.

In one moment I was on my feet and shaking the dust of that place off my feet, but before I went I made the ex-lambadar (head-man) understand what I thought of him. He had certainly been reduced by the authorities from his office, but as it devolved on his brother or son, he was not made to smart very severely for his gross behaviour. I had met with similar callousness on the march up to Kulu. Having had to leave my pony behind on account of a girth gall, and not yet having made the dandy, I went lame on the march. A man passed us on a pony, which we begged him to lend us, on hire of course, for a few miles, as he was going in the same direction. But he was by no means a good Samaritan, and galloped off, leaving me disappointed to the verge of tears. He was a trifle less hard-hearted than the other man, as he told another man to bring a pony to meet us; but it only saved me a short mile, as we had nearly reached the end of our walk, and my tether too. It was my first attempt at riding astride, and very hard I found it to stick on.

I was well up in the magnificent forest of deodars which led to the Hamta when my husband overtook me, and by then I was quite glad to get a lift in the one-pole dandy to a col, where we rested and had lunch.

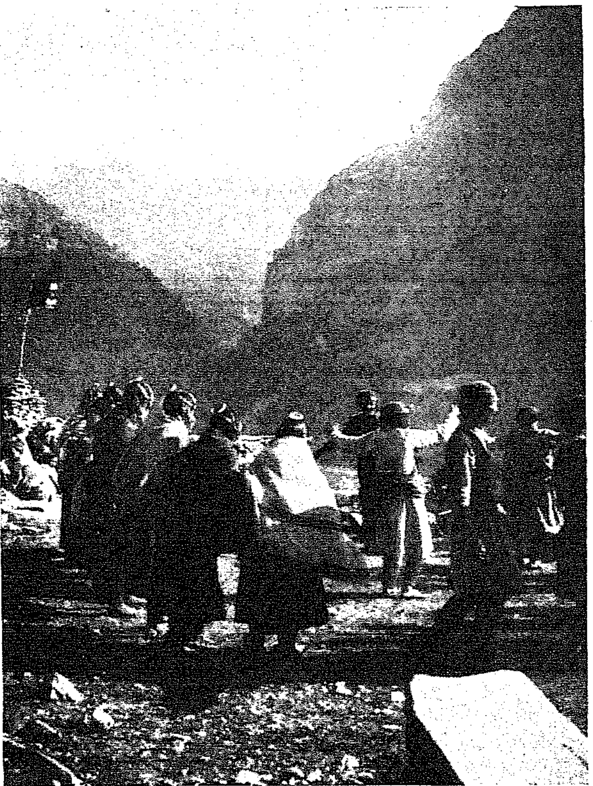
More beautiful forest brought us to an alp, where we soon selected a charming camp. One day we went farther up the valley, and the better half of the party pushed on up to a good height in order to photograph Indra Killah. It was too far for me, and so I sat and guarded the lunch-basket under a grove of the finest birch-trees I have ever seen.

I tried to sketch, but how hopelessly, the opposite bank, with its silver lacing of birch trunks and golden-brown bracken. Every now and then pearly-grey bands of wild pigeons swept across quite close to me, disappearing into clefts of the steep cliffs, then swirling out again and vanishing, only to reappear higher or lower down, as the fancy took them. Three hours later the survey party returned, bounding down the long grass slopes and over rocky places like so many goats, and soon were enjoying a miscellaneous lunch, with a dessert of tea. The walk home to camp was just one of those occasions which live in the memory, every look, every step, every breath a delight.

On the way down to Manali, which was to be our last sojourn in that attractive spot, I saw the slippery bank in the Hamta forest which had been the scene of the accident. The clay and the angle at which the bank lay were sufficient to provide a nasty slide on a wet day, but, as is so often the case, it seemed a mockery that so severe an injury should have occurred here when really dangerous passes and mountains



THE ONE-POLE DANDY.



DEVIL DANCE.

had been successfully engineered. Thank God all the serious climbs met with no reverse. Some three or four years ago, when I broke my ankle up in the far hills, it happened in the veranda of a bangalow. I was told afterwards that people had said that if I would go climbing with my husband I must expect such things to happen! Rather scant sympathy! Still, the fact remains that both these accidents might just as well have occurred in the safe precincts of the cantonment.

A delightful invitation had come at this time asking me to stay with Colonel and Mrs. Tyacke at their cottage two marches down the road. So on the morning that my husband and his Gurkhas set off up the Manali Nullah I started about eight o'clock, and, with my dog, reached Raisan by lunch-time. The troublesome ankle had by this time grown quite strong, and I thoroughly enjoyed the walk, which wound along the river bank. I came at last to a little gate into the lane leading up to the house, and if the mountain-sides and the Kulu folk had been subtracted, I could have imagined myself in a pretty English garden. A small but well-kept lawn surrounded the house. The veranda was bright with baskets of hanging geraniums and creepers and pot plants, and a hedge divided off the gayest of little flower gardens. Gum-trees and loquats in a shady grove protected the vegetable garden, and fine walnut-trees gave grateful shade to the other side of the house. Under one of these my tent was soon pitched, and every now and then a ripe nut would drop at my canvas door.

That evening we had a pleasant ramble along the

river close by, first of all passing through fields of tall maize and ripening wheat, then across the road and on to short turf, delightful to the feet which had for so many weeks been accustomed to rough stony paths. The flocks we had so often met were now on their way down to graze on the sweet grass which springs up after the rains. There were rumours of leopards in consequence, but we saw none.

The next morning reminded me much of home as I crossed a dewy lawn and found my host at work in his garden, tying up some of the lovely carnations, which soon provided me with a buttonhole. Roses and honeysuckle rambled over rustic trellises, and a host of bright flowers scented the air.

Colonel Tyacke was an ardent photographer, and so we had much in common on that subject. With glee I seized and carried off to my tent a new photographic periodical, and promised myself a happy hour with paper and pencil when I should fall with open eyes into the trap skilfully baited with novelties. I spent a very attractive afternoon, although my list went no further than my writing-case—the fate of all lists from catalogues, it seems to me.

These ever-increasing makes of cameras, plates, papers, and 'jims' are very seldom used by professional photographers. They know what a limited amount of paraphernalia is really indispensable. A good lens and any sort of dark box, provided the plates are also reliable, correct exposure and development—these are the Alpha and Omega of photography.

The gift of a Verascope camera and a perfect brand of Ilford plates and developer made my work simple.

Most of the subjects had been all that could be desired, and very few failures resulted, fortunately.

Before leaving Manali we had packed with great care and consigned to the Postmaster with many anxious forebodings our precious parcel of developed negatives. It seemed a far cry from that little shed of a post-office in Kulu to Ilford and Co., England, and no amount of insurance money could compensate us for loss or breakage or give us back these records of our cheery party and the strenuous days of climbing and conquest. Still, we had to trust to luck, and finally bade farewell to our packet and left it to accomplish its journey, starting in the company of hundreds of pounds of apples—a black sheep in its waterproof covering among a flock of white fruit baskets. Weeks of patient, or rather impatient waiting must elapse before we could hear of the safety of our plates.

Naturally, a sentimental interest attaches to any object over which one has spent time and trouble—often, indeed, a value beyond its intrinsic worth. Still, one may be forgiven this in the case of pictures which one may never be able to repeat. I had thought it best to develop the exposed plates in batches as they were taken, and with only a dark bag in which to work this was by no means easy, and I used to emerge hot and dishevelled from the airless folds. The washing of plates, too, when on the march is a worrying performance and a precarious one. The best place of all was at the little cottage at Kyelang, as a water-course flowed past the house, and I could arrange a dish full of plates and leave them safely to wash.

How we used to long for colour-plates in order to record the exquisite range of tints of the Kulu Valley during those two months after we returned from Lahoul! If only one could have reproduced those rich harvest scenes of orange and amber and crimson, of rose and golden green, with the sparkling background of snows and sky! Perhaps some day it may be possible.

The women of Kulu are well worth photographing. They are picturesquely dressed, wear fascinating ornaments, and are generally well featured. The grey pony at Raisan Cottage was groomed and petted by a pretty specimen of the local matrons. She was the wife of Colonel Tyacke's syce, and when I took her photograph was quite ready with her best expression. She had been an expensive young lady to her husband, having cost him forty rupees before coming to grace his home, and I am afraid to say how much more later on to accomplish her return from somebody else's! It is a pity that these civilized-looking girls and women should have such lax morals, and much spoils the pleasure one feels when greeted by their comely smiling faces.

The influences of their religious system and their many gods has no practical effect upon their lives. Cunning and even barefaced lying is a thing to be proud of in Kulu eyes, and if a tiny child can deceive his mother he is looked upon as smart and promising. I pitied poor Mrs. Tyacke with her domestic trials. There is a seamy side to the charms of life in Kulu if one is to make even a temporary home there.

The local people are impossible as house-servants,

and the imported ones leave their hearts in the Panjab, and can with difficulty and high wages be induced to stay.

But none of these troubles appeared on the surface, although, as a housekeeper myself, I could gauge their extent, and I knew quite well that most of the daintiness of house and board was due to the gentle, kindly châtelaine herself. But this was not the only accomplishment of Mrs. Tyacke. She was also a great sportswoman, as anyone who has read her book, 'How I Shot my Bears,' can testify; indeed, Colonel Tyacke would proudly insist that she was the better man of the two with a rifle. She was courageous to a degree, and he told me, too, how, when they were tracking bear in the nullahs, better known to no one than themselves, she would wave a red flag across a ravine if she saw tracks in his direction.

I fear I am no sportsman, and have never loved the handling of firearms. On one memorable occasion, when in my teens, I did actually hit a bottle floating in a pond, at that time a very favourite amusement of my brother's. But alas! I was even disqualified then, for I had fired with my eyes tight shut, and had only pulled the trigger in desperation. On these inglorious laurels I have rested ever since. Again, I must repeat that the Kulu folk are hopeless as domestic servants, adding a note of surprise that they should not eagerly jump at the chance which is much sought after by other peasants. The reason very probably is that they are too well off, and neither desire nor need to make the effort nor wish to curtail their liberty. Their 'days off,' as it is, exceed even those demanded by the British domestic servant.

The local fair days correspond to our Bank Holidays, but exceed these in number, and most certainly are more liberal in refreshments. The Kulu folk have far too many merry jousts; moreover, they require not only the day itself, but the day after in which to recover from its libations.

Provisioning an English table in Kulu even with a simple menu is not as simple a matter as might appear. Chickens are not kept by Hindus as a rule. They regard a poultry yard in much the same manner as a Mohammedan regards a pigsty. Some will import them for sale to Sahibs, though, of course, anyone can keep poultry who settles in the valley. Beef is barred naturally. Fish is generally preserved. Groceries are almost prohibitive in price, owing to the ten days' coolie or mule transport before importation into Kulu. Game is subject to times and seasons. As to dairy produce, in spite of splendid grazing, the cows are so inferior that there is a great scarcity of milk, and bi-weekly parcels of butter from the plains show that it is not a local product. Vegetables and fruit can be cultivated, but are not on sale. Rice and mutton are the main products, and pall after a time.

To go so intimately into the subject of food may seem beside the mark, but it is enlarged upon because such vague ideas exist in the minds of those who have not travelled in out-of-the-way places. Some people think one lives on native food, some that one gets the fat of the land for nothing. Neither is a correct idea. In some parts of the country one may be fortunate in getting more variety, or have a rather questionable present thrust upon one—often by way of bread cast

upon the waters—but the fact remains that ordinary camp fare requires a healthy appetite as sauce, for it is confined to necessities as a rule. One would be ashamed of saying one lived to eat anywhere, but one certainly reverses the phrase in camp life.

And so much the better. We generally start for the mountains primed with good resolutions to reduce superfluous tissue, but our means are fairly Spartan. A friend once put me through a string of questions somewhat in this fashion:

Mrs. M.: 'What do you do for butter? Do you get it by post?' Mrs. B.: 'Oh no; we never eat butter in camp.' 'Do you go in for many puddings?' 'No, we don't care for puddings; we get what fruit we can.' 'Well, one can always make out with jam.' 'Yes, but we take very little jam.' 'I always carry a coop of chickens, and have fresh eggs daily.' 'I have never tried that; we just get them when they are to be had.' 'What about potatoes?' 'Oh, we cut off potatoes—too fattening.' 'You take plenty of tinned things, then?' 'No, as few as possible; they are so expensive, and increase the loads.' 'Of course, if one begins the day with a good plate of porridge——' 'We never touch porridge.' At last my friend in despair threw up her hands. 'Then what on earth do you live on—air?' I reassured her that we had ample food to keep soul and body together.

At the same time, there are three important items I would never be without, and they are tea, Worcester sauce, biscuits, and since our trial of it last year, that excellent food called Emprote.

If the servant difficulty could be compassed, a settler's life in Kulu might be as pleasant as in British

Columbia. Officials, of course, are not troubled in this way, for it is always worth while to work for the powers that be, so thinks the native of most parts of India, where it is not worth serving anyone who cannot be expected to serve you; but the servant question is very much greater out here, where one cannot without loss of prestige live as one can in any colony.

There is grand scope, however, for those who are fond of gardening, for the conditions in Kulu are most favourable. Most of the settlers in the valley devote themselves chiefly to fruit culture, but I can imagine building a house on a hillside, clearing the ground, and finally laying out a terraced garden. Picture the fascination, when all was complete, of ending the march by a climb up from the road, after threading one's way through fields and a shady lane, and finally climbing up through dark forest, to emerge on to a terrace blazing with flowers—geraniums, begonias, and a host of the home favourites which would flourish in this lovely valley; to pace paths under pergolas of rambling roses, and catch the haunting fragrance of mignonette and lavender and sweetbriar; or in the springtime to watch all the bulbs lighting up the wild garden, and spreading a golden carpet beneath sombre deodars. It would be a delightful venture, and personally I believe I should prefer it to British Columbia. To come upon a cultured garden in a wild setting has a special piquancy.

The little cottage and garden at Raisan was just an instance of the touch of home and individuality which most British people do contrive to impart wherever they take root, and not only Britishers, by any means. The contrast between East and West

makes one long to build a bridge to connect the two, and so ease the pain of giving up so much to which one clings. It makes a great difference bringing a few of one's household gods out to a strange country, and it is a joy to live in a climate which admits of old home favourite flowers being grown. Certainly my Indian garden and the flowers of the field out here have counted as real friends, and have painted many a dull or lonely day with cheering hues. A soldier's wife must often be left at home, and a great solace is to be found in flowers, their tending, or their gathering in the country-side.

It was with pleasant and grateful memories that we took leave of our kind hosts at Raisan. My husband returned to pick me up, and spent two days here after trying to trace Führer's footsteps in the snow on the scene of his late triumphs in the Manali Nullah. Apart from enjoying the beauty of the nullah, nothing much could be done. The late rains had melted away firm tracts of snow, leaving a heart-breaking substratum of huge boulders over which frothed a sea of rank vegetation, only redeemed by the glorious giant balsams.

After passing through my first camp in Kulu, Katrain, we went to visit the village and people which hold themselves so aloof from the rest of Kulu. The walk was a steep one as we climbed up the forest spur, and I was thankful for my dandy, though I constantly walked for pure pleasure in the crisp air. We enjoyed the most perfect view from the pass as we rested and lunched.

If the climb up had been steep, the descent was a ladder, and set at an acute angle, too. For three

thousand feet we followed the rough rocky steps which led us to the brink of the mystery which has never been really plumbed to its depth. The ancestry of the Malana folk can only be surmised at. There was good reason for the very few people we saw, as they were mostly away harvesting, but it seemed to add to the hedge of impenetrability which already surrounded them. Under the guidance of two men we made the tour of the village, having slipped off our boots and put on some very nice string slippers—a Kulu specialty.

It seemed like a deserted village, so silent and empty, and even the few women we met hardly cast a glance at us from the shelter of the cowl-like hoods they wore. The young men, with their good looks and pleasant smiles, were, I was going to say, much more approachable, but they were of such inexpressible grime that I preferred to admire them from a distance.

To take up one's camp-bed from a comfortable English home and a late-dinner existence and set it down in a bivouac-tent on a forest shelf was quite a sensational move. In Switzerland it is a common thing to dine at *table d'hôte* one night and sit around a hut-fire the next, but in the Himalaya such an experience is rare, and makes one appreciate the good points in both. It is as simple as stepping from one room to another, and one takes to the simple life so easily. The early nights are perhaps one of the best factors in a Nature cure. In these days most people burn their candle at both ends, for nearly all are early risers in India.

Then the delightful cessation of that petty perse-

cution known as 'chits' (notes) and the endless interruptions of station life are two more blessings. And perhaps most of all the severe reduction of the increasing impedimenta of 'things,' for however charming and apparently necessary to one's life all things of beauty and invention may be, still to do without them for a while acts as a tonic. To cast a thought at such times to a London shop filled with every latest novelty is to bring home to one how very little is absolutely necessary to true happiness.

The post is one thing that cannot be dispensed with, however. No one accustomed to hearing the postman's rap every few hours can gauge the excitement with which the traveller watches for the post-runner. The eyes wander a dozen times in a minute to the first spot at which he can be seen arriving.

Books and papers, as well as letters, become of even greater value than at other times. In fact, the enjoyment of all realities deepens, and the return from camp nearly always finds one in better case, body and soul, than at the start.

At first sight one would say that the members of any camping-party who have the best of it are those who can achieve most, either as sportsmen or mountaineers; but although I have to play the part very often of camp-keeper, I have my days, too. Some of the best of them are the halfway meetings, when I can spy the returning host, or have news to guide me to meet it. The very delight of such meetings reveals to one what the tension has been during some climb or few days' absence. In spite of the growth of faith, there are bound to be anxious hours, but these are forgotten in the thrill of hearing the history

of what has occurred. Up in the Solang Nullah the dogs and I had several delightful walks or scrambles over snow to welcome the climbers, with the conquest of the mountains still vividly present to them.

Say what people may in scorn of mountaineering, it still remains a magnificent sport. It calls forth qualities the exercise of which can but ennoble. There is nothing small, nothing selfish in it. True, there are no silver cups to be won, no trophies, except, perhaps, photographs, to bring home for the adornment of walls. Even in the world of adventure it seems to come second to any Arctic or Antarctic expedition; but it is not always record climbs which really rank highest, for they often call for less in every way, with their better outfit and provisioning, than many a smaller one.

The more one knows of the Himalaya, the more it is borne in on one how little hope there is of seeing more than a tithe of their wonders. That one pair of feet should penetrate all their recesses or climb all their peaks is, of course, beyond the wildest possibility. No motor-car can rush from end to end; even visits of flying-machines would not reveal their entirety. They must be visited on foot in order to be fully appreciated. What a blessing, though, that the Himalayan world can never be vulgarized. Fortunately, it would not pay to have funicular railways up Nanga Parbat or Kinchenjanga, even if it were possible.

We are told that Kashmir is 'played out.' It rather depends what part of the happy valley is meant. Possibly Srinagar and its environs or Gulmarg might thus be described, for they are overcrowded every year, certainly; but there are many

other hills and margs which would make ideal camping-grounds, though most of them are probably fairly well known to sportsmen. The world seems to be growing too gregarious, to its own loss. But there are still some who crave for the healing springs of silence and space who would revel in many sequestered spots in Kulu, as well as in the overrun Kashmir. The craze for golf has a good deal to say to the overcrowding of Gulmarg. It is difficult to understand the craze for 'company' and games to such an extent, at all events, which makes every hour spent alone with Nature described as 'so dull.' After six months of station life one would fancy it a relief to vary one's daily programme, and to pack away smart clothes for a month or two; but the round of station life is only transferred to a spot that is cool and has a view of the snows from a picnic-ground.

But the Himalaya can never be played out, even in quite easily reached districts. It is absolutely inexhaustible, and that is something to be grateful for in these days, when one often feels cribbed and cabined for want of space and liberty. It gives one a sense of wide possession to roam over hill-country where there are no notices warning one off. There is certainly one other reason which prevents a certain number of people from going off the beaten track, and that is fear. Of course, it is a question which no one person can decide for another; still, there is no doubt that in the days when telegraphs and railways were less common people were necessarily of tougher nerve, and I very much doubt if they were not the better for it. To be within reach of a doctor is a boon in some ways, but a weakening

factor, too. As a rule one is so fit and well in camp that the chances of a doctor being required are rare. Accidents will occur everywhere, but if no one had ever taken risks we should be a sorry race now.

Personally, we have both been singularly unfortunate in meeting with serious accidents when out of reach of medical aid, but we are none the worse, thank God! Considering the very few fatal ends to illness or accident when out in the wilds, I am sure that the game is worth the candle, and have enlarged on the subject in order to encourage some who would dearly like to travel off the beaten track, and yet dare not put their fears in their pockets and cultivate faith. We build many bridges to meet trouble which we are not called upon to cross. The great thing is so to try and increase one's knowledge as to be able to treat ordinary illness or accident. With anything acute there is usually some way of escape.

One of our chief reasons for going up the Parvattiya Valley was to see the so-called best part of Kulu. I don't know that I enjoyed the scenery more than that of the main valley, and for one who is a walker only, and not a climber, I think I should recommend the main Kulu Valley first. The snow views are certainly finer from the main road. The march from Rushok, a village perched on a field shelf, was rather stony at first, but when we neared the hot springs of Manikarn the scenery improved every half-mile. What would not the housemaids of the country-house of past days prior to bath-rooms and hot-water taps on every landing have given for a natural hot-water supply! No need then to rise at six o'clock in order to provide sufficient warm baths for the family.

How often one remembers shivering on the brink of two inches of chilly water because the maids had overslept themselves! That was never the excuse given, however. 'Cook says as how the boiler wouldn't 'eat this morning,' was the reason alleged. Boilers—man-made ones—are kittle cattle to deal with. Not so these at Manikarn. The hot springs steam away day and night, winter and summer, and when, after a tiring march, we arrived at the little bangalow, I asked that my bath might be turned on, an old man outside just removed a wedge of mud which had turned the fresh stream into the river hard by, and in five minutes the stone tank inside the dressing-room was full of hot water, and most reviving it was.

The people at Manikarn seemed to take much more advantage of their natural blessing than the Bashist villagers. They also boiled their rice in the rocky caldron beside the river, and it was amusing to see them fishing out the little bundles they had thrown in half an hour ago.

Next day's walk was lovely, and might have been up a Scotch glen. The river was larger, of course, than a burn, and had still enough churning waters to hurl the great logs of wood on their down-stream journey. Many logs were held up, though, and we spent some amusing minutes watching and speculating on the chances of piles of wood which here and there seemed likely to spend the winter in retreat. Sometimes one log would touch them, and then almost the whole lot would joyfully continue the voyage. They reminded one of country-folk eagerly seeking a town life, and unconscious, like them, of the poor

exchange in leaving forest, river, and beauty for the noise and dust and turmoil of the railway and town.

I wished we could have found some of the famous Kulu sapphires which were at one time found in abundance up this valley. There is a story of a Panjabi Babu who carried off a duster full of gems.

During the two days spent at Phulga I learnt the strenuousness of chikore-shooting, as I accompanied the sportsman in some of the mildest of his scrambles. After breathless forcing of one's way through thorny bushes and over loose stones I was nearly precipitated down the hillside as a covey of birds suddenly whirred up almost in my face—most startling! But I was now in much better condition, and able to join my husband again on our road back to Simla, for the end of our trip was well within sight now.

If only Jibi were cleaner, it would be rather an attractive spot to stay a day or two, especially for sportsmen, as it held a good many chikore. The attraction to me was the country round, and the situation of the village, which is perched on a shelf of the hillside. I distributed here, as I had done at intervals all the past months, spare tins and a bottle or two. These were always coveted by the country-people. One grateful woman brought me a present in return—a lapful of poppy-heads, a useful item for a medicine cupboard. Another poor soul came creeping down to my tent, but not for tins. She begged for medicine, and I made up a mixture and some powders which could not kill, even though they could not cure. I hoped that they might for a time ease her poor aches and pains, and her faith that they would do this went far to make them of use to her.

We did not come across many sick folk. As a rule they simply haunt one's tents, and have the greatest, most touching faith in Sahib's or Memsahib's doctoring.

Our road now was the well-known one to Simla, but I had never before seen this side of the Simla hills. It was the best time to see any country, and we had it all to ourselves still. I should like to have spent a few days at Kôte. The bangalow had a pretty bit of lawn in front, and the deodar forest all round was magnificent.

The walk up through the forest to Narkanda was perfect. Autumn had painted the bracken brown and gold, and the wild pear's vivid scarlet touched up gloomy trees. But, indeed, there was little gloom anywhere. Everything sparkled and shone with colour far and near.

The halt at Narkanda had a separate and special emotion for me, as I knew my parents had stayed there many years ago, when my father had held a staff appointment at Simla. I knew well his sketches painted from this very veranda, and in the old days, as I used to pour over his book of Indian paintings, I little knew how I should spend most of my life out here, and see for myself the beauties of this wonderful country. There was one picture I always loved. It gave so truly the blue atmosphere through the tops of the forests.

The march from Narkanda was rather dull, but there was a fine panorama spread out along the horizon, of which we got a splendid view at Phagu. Some of our old Kulu friends stood out, and there was a new range at which we looked longingly.

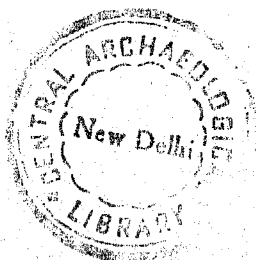
We were brought down with a rush to civilization at this bangalow by finding a telephone had been installed in the veranda corner. My husband immediately made use of it to send a message into Simla asking if a rickshaw could be sent out halfway to meet me. He had his own pony, and my faithful 'Watson' was able and willing; but I could hardly ride through the Simla Mall in camp garments, and wished to arrive spick and span, even if I was sunburnt.

Before leaving Phagu we found we were charged double rate for the use of the telephone. As we demurred at paying double, the man in charge made answer that certainly we had only sent one message, 'but, Sahib, there are two of you,' and nothing would induce him to see reason.

Finding ourselves once more in the vicinity of shops, we naturally found we were in want of all manner of things; but, still better, we also found some old friends, and had a delightful three days' visit to Lady Du Boulay at her house on a hill from which we could wave a fond farewell to our late scene of travel. How well we seemed to know those beautiful peaks, and how intimately we remembered the valleys, now hidden from sight, and that far-off Lahoul, with its more stately grandeur, and the little cottage so high up, and the quaint folk now so befriended by the quiet, devoted missionaries! What an immense new collection of pictures our minds and memories now possessed!

After dining out one evening, we enjoyed a long, swift run home by rickshaw. It was a perfect moonlight night, and our speedy mode of travel contrasted

vividly with all the plodding of the last few months, and yet I think that greater enjoyment results from working hard, although I will not go so far as to say that the weary climbers of Soft Stone Camp would not have preferred spring beds to their Jacob's couches. So ended one of the most happy and, taking it all round, one of the most successful of our Himalayan wanderings, and I feel inclined to recommend those who are able, and would like to see a new part of the great forest country of India, to go and do likewise. Although one of a serious climbing party (serious only from one point of view, be it understood), I did nothing which any healthy woman could not do, and I had very little time alone, considering the heights they accomplished. There certainly could be no pleasanter travelling of the kind, and no more beautiful itinerary than that which I was privileged to enjoy.



APPENDIX

ROUTES TO KULU AND LAHOUL (WINTER AND SUMMER). REMARKS ON SUPPLIES, ETC.

Summer Route from Simla to Kulu and Lahoul.

To— Marches.		Miles.		
1. Fagu ..	..	11½	..	Dak bangalow.
2. Theog ..	..	5½	..	Dak bangalow.
3. Matiana ..	..	11	..	Dak bangalow.
4. Narkanda	..	11	..	Dak bangalow.
5. Luri Bridge	..	14	..	Rest-house.
6. Dalash ..	..	7	..	Rest-house.
7. Chawai ..	..	8	..	Rest-house.
8. Kôt ..	..	9	..	Rest-house.

[Cross Jalaori Pass, 10,650 feet.]

9. Jibi ..	..	10½	..	Rest-house.
10. Manglaor	..	8½	..	Rest-house.
11. Larji ..	..	7½	..	Rest-house.

In Kulu.

12. Bajaura ..	..	12	..	Dak bangalow.
13. Sultanpur	..	10	..	Dak bangalow.
14. Katrain ..	..	11½	..	Rest-house.
15. Manali ..	..	12	..	Rest-house.
16. Rahla ..	..	9	..	Rest-house.

[Cross Rahtang Pass, 13,400 feet.]

SUMMER ROUTE FROM SIMLA TO KULU AND LAHOUL—(*continued*).

In Lahoul.

To— MARCHES.	MILES.	
17. Sissu	12	Rest-house.
18. Gundla	7	Rest-house.
19. Kailang	10	Headquarters of Lahoul. (10,300 feet.)
20. Jispa	13	Rest-house.
21. Patseo	12	Rest-house.
22. Baralacha Pass	—	No house. (16,200 feet.)

WINTER ROUTE FROM SIMLA TO KULU.

To— MARCHES.	MILES.	
1. Ghanna	7	Bangalow.
2. Arki	14	Bangalow.
3. Namhol	15	Bangalow.
4. Bilaspur	13	Bangalow.
5. Dihur	12	Bangalow.
6. Bhojpur	12	Bangalow.
7. Mandi	14	Bangalow.
8. Kataula	14	Bangalow.
9. Kandi	9	Bangalow.
In Kulu.		
10. Bajaura	9	Bangalow.
11. Sultanpur	9	Bangalow.

SUMMER ROUTE FROM PALAMPUR (KANGRA VALLEY).

Leave North-Western Railway at Pathan Kôt Station. Tonga drive of 73 miles to Palampur, Kangra. (Bangalow.)

To— MARCHES.	MILES.	
1. Baijnath	9½	Rest-house.
2. Dhelu	12	Rest-house.
3. Jatingri	11	Rest-house.
4. Badwani	12	Rest-house.
[Cross Babboo Pass, 10,000 feet.]		
In Kulu.		
5. Karaun	10	Dak bangalow.
6. Sultanpur	8	Rest-house.

Winter Route from Palampur (Kangra Valley).

To— Marches.		Miles.		
1. Baijnath ..	..	9½	..	Rest-house.
2. Dhelu ..	..	12	..	Rest-house.
In Mandi State.				
3. Horla ..	..	12	..	Rest-house.
4. Drang ..	..	12	..	Rest-house.
5. Kataula ..	..	12	..	Rest-house.
[Cross Dulchi Pass, 6,500 feet.]				
In Kulu.				
6. Bajaura ..	..	18	..	Rest-house.
7. Sultanpur	..	9	..	Rest-house.

Remarks on Transport, Etc.

Travellers to Kulu should apply for carriage (mule or pony), also for coolies, to the Tehsildar either of Simla or of Palampur, according to the route they wish to follow.

On arrival in Kulu, carriage will also be supplied by the Tehsildar of Sultanpur, Kulu.

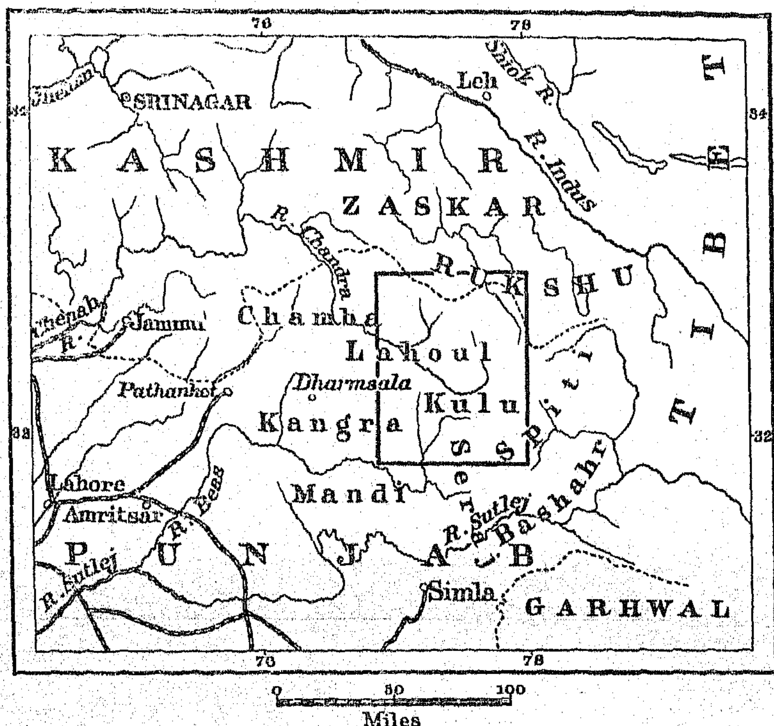
In Lahoul application should be made to the Thakur of Lahoul.

It is as well to give at least two days' notice for all carriage or coolies.

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THE END

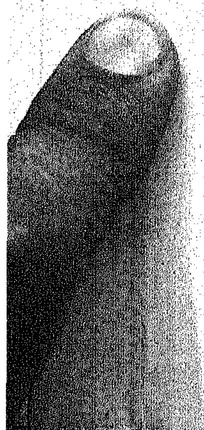
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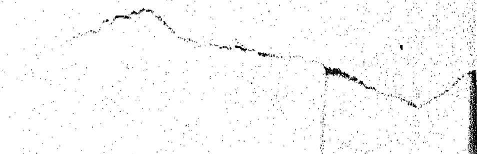


Map showing the Relative Position of Kulu and Lahoul to the Surrounding Districts.

The square indicates the area shown in the large map.

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KULU AND LAHOUL.

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